

The Illustrated London News.



Christmas Number
1880.

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MARGARET DONNAN.

BY MRS. J. H. RIDDELL.

CHAPTER I.

Not far from the ancient city of Carrickfergus, a little off the shore road leading to Kilroot, Templecorran, Island Magee, Lame, and thence on northward to the Giant's Causeway, lay, some forty years since, close down on the very margin of the lough, a mere cluster of cottages, called, in the semi-Scotch dialect of that part of Ireland, "Bonny-before."

Never was name better deserved, for a lovelier expanse of sea, a fairer sweep of shore, it would have been difficult to find. On the other side of the lough, over the blue of the water, lay the green hills, under which nestle Holywood and Bangor; while, further still, from the depths of the county of Down, rose the Mourne Mountains. Nearer Belfast, beyond the grey old castle, jutting on its rocky foundations so grandly out into the sea, were to be seen the soft outlines of the Knockagh, the Cave Hill, and finally, higher than both, the blue of Devis mingling with the sky.

What that stretch of coast may look like now, when railways are striding all over the country and changing the whole face of nature, it would be difficult to say; but in the old "long ago" it was a lonely land, sparsely inhabited by a hardy, stalwart, honest, industrious, independent population, poor as they were brave, full of tenderness and piety and poetry as their lives were bare of luxury, and terribly practical.

They were a wonderful race of men, mated to women as honest and enduring as themselves. They went down into the sea and saw the wonders of the deep. They were learned in all nautical mysteries needful to be acquired on so rugged and treacherous a coast—could perceive sudden squalls coming down amid the hills and sweeping along the surface of the deceitful lough long ere they broke upon their boats—they knew every rock on the coast, every sandbank in the bay; but all their knowledge and all their seamanship proved sometimes ineffectual to bring them safe to land; and many a grey head-stone, or more frequently simply a swelling mound in the graveyards round and about, bore sorrowful memory to the fate of father, husband, brother, or son, who, having left his home strong and hearty, came back no more—till he was carried thither, his rough pea-jacket wet with the last salt spray which should ever touch him, his rugged face quiet in death, his hair full of sand and seaweed, and his brave, loving, God-fearing heart at peace for ever.

About the lives of those men there was an infinite pathos. Their pleasures were so few, their dangers so constant, their privations so many, their work so incessant, that their features wore a gravity strange to those unacquainted with the perils they encountered, the hardships they endured—a gravity which was reflected in the countenances of their wives, and lurked in the dimples and mingled with the laughter of even their youngest children.

Yet no question existence held deep, passionate pleasures for natures so exceptional, fashioned in so stern a mould. Their love of country—of home—of parents, children, wives—of the sea, which gave them the means of subsistence, and often provided them with a grave—would have seemed almost incredible to those unaware that the narrower a man's possessions, the stronger his attachment for them generally grows. They had a wild, fervent, silent appreciation of the beautiful; and the sea talked to their hearts as no human being could ever have done—whether bathed in golden glory when the sun was setting behind the Cave Hill, or dancing in the light of a summer's morning, or lying quiet in the depths of silvery brightness under the moon's rays, or sullen as November skies, or tossing wildly in its terrible unrest.

Yes, they loved it; though oftentimes a cruel mother, it had lulled their infancy, nursed them on its breast, fed them, clothed them, provided (directly or indirectly) all of interest, pleasure, and excitement their poor lives held. The children waded in the water and played with the waves; they lay in the fish-creels, and they sat on the ground at their fathers' feet while he mended the nets he hoped to bring back full of fish, which he was just then beginning to complain steam-boats were frightening from their feeding-grounds.

The White Quay at Carrickfergus (so called because it was white, and further to distinguish it from the Town Quay, lying under the shadow of the old Castle, where at the landing-steps is shown the stone on which William the Third first set foot in Ireland) was the favourite anchorage for the fishing-craft; and no prettier sight can be imagined than to see a little fleet of them set sail on summer evenings for the distant Gobbins, or any other well-known haunt, the lumbering boats—built to withstand rough seas and wild tempests—picturesque when viewed from a short distance—the sails dressed with tan, glowing red in the beams of the setting sun—the men busy at the rudder, and tacking to avail themselves of every breath of wind—the Castle, on its rocky foundations, looking grand and grim and grey, and apparently unconscious of the softened and beautiful reflection of itself lying quiet in the depths of the glassy water beneath—the green hills on the opposite side of the lough giving so peaceful and homelike a touch to the landscape, green hills dotted here and there with whitewashed cottages.

A striking scene in its peaceful repose; and none the less striking to the beholder, who knew that each man on board those boats, casting off so cheerily, held his life in his hand—that an hour or two might find the whole aspect of nature changed—storm in lieu of sunshine, rolling waves where the reflection of the Castle now lay unbroken; crested billows dashing against the high sea-wall; the green hills blotted out from view; the Knockagh and its fellows shrouded in thick mist; a grey sky looking down on an angry sea; and wives with little children clinging, frightened, to their skirts, straining their eyes to catch sight of any returning craft which might bring news of the whereabouts and safety of its fellows.

As in war there are always families who lose more of their bravest and best than others, so in the midst of this humble seafaring community were households set, after a fashion, apart, and regarded reverently by reason of the afflictions wherewith God had seen fit to visit them.

In the hamlet mentioned, lying not far from that poor mean little quarter of Carrickfergus then called The Green—though there was nothing rural left about its appearance save a towering maypole—a quarter inhabited almost exclusively by fishermen, there lived one woman who seemed to have been especially marked for misfortune.

Her name was Margaret Donnan. To have looked in her wrinkled, weatherbeaten face, to have considered her coarse dress, to have watched her countenance when she stood meekly aside while the "gentlefolk," passing in their carriages or galloping along the muddy roads, splashed her patched garments, to have seen the humble deference with which she curtsied to her betters, no stranger would have imagined her to be made of the finest material out of which heroines are formed. And yet this is but the simplest statement of a true case. She had suffered as few women suffer, she had borne as few women do, struggled as few women can. Cold, damp, privations, long vigils, days of hunger, nights of weeping, had made her, years previously, older than her age; and it was

difficult to imagine she ever could have been a beautiful woman.

In her youth, however, in her girlhood and her early married life, she was one of the loveliest girls possible—straight as a dart, lithe as a willow, active as a fawn, with eyes deep, dark, lustrous, a delicate rose tint in her cheeks, teeth white and regular, lips like cherries, said her admirers, and a brow whiter than any lily. When she unbound her black, glossy hair, it fell in wavy masses of undulating crispness almost to her knees. Her neck was well set on her shoulders. She had a small, straight nose, a short upper lip, a rounded chin, ears like delicate sea-shells, and a laugh clear and joyous and happy.

At that time she was Maggie Harrigan, with plenty of suitors, each one anxious to change that name for his own. Some were handsome; some, for their station, well to do. One even owned a small freehold and a slated cottage; but the girl passed them all by and put her hand into that of Robert Donnan, which was held out doubtfully and as if its owner were half in terror of his boldness, for her to take.

She never repented her choice. Through weal and through woe, through the short summer, and the long, long winter to follow, she never wished herself unwed. When she was hungry she had no regrets for the fleshpots of Egypt. When she laid him dead in his coffin, she felt she would not have exchanged him for any man living.

He lost his life "as a man should," was his unwritten epitaph, graven on the hearts of his fellows.

He was trying to save the lives of others; "but he had not rightly got his strength after the fever, and he was weak for want of nourishing food;" and so, when the wild waves washed him out of the boat, he could not withstand their violence, and, after one ineffectual struggle, sank to rise no more. Before he went, however, six sons had preceded him into the Silent Land; and, the most awful misfortune which could befall such a man, he lost his only daughter.

Had she died he would not have counted her lost; but as things were he did not know, he "could not tell," he "feared the worst," he "could not hope at all."

The girl said she was married; but God above alone knew. No, he had never seen her since the night she went away.

"And how she could go," he said, "beats me altogether."

This was the strongest expression of anger he ever uttered on the subject, and, save when anyone probed the wound, it might have been thought he failed to feel the smart. But his wife knew—by the light of her own heart she read his, and could tell what he was thinking about when he walked, with head drooping, solitary beside the shore, and did not answer immediately he was spoken to when mending his nets, and looked with sad, sorrowful eyes at any little dark-eyed girl who smiled up in his face, and sat in the house smoking by himself when his fellow-fishers were lounging about the shore or lying on the shingle talking over such odds and ends of gossip as floated like other worthless flotsam and jetsam adown the narrow channel of their lives.

It was the evening of the day when he had been laid to sleep in that lovely burying-ground on the road to Raloo, belonging to the Covenanters, and his wife sat all alone in the cottage with its gable turned towards the sea, where, during the whole of her married life, she had never felt solitary before, though oftentimes sorry, and sometimes sick.

The neighbours who would fain have kept her company were gone—one to look after her children, another to see to her bedridden mother, a third to get ready her husband's tea—they were forced to leave her, and Margaret was not grieved so to be left.

In the silence of the mystical twilight she felt her dead more present with her than when there was what she called a "stir of strange voices" about.

She rose and paced the earthen floor his feet would never tread again; she looked out of the small window whence she might see the familiar figure returning to his home—no more; her eyes fell on the rude fireplace, the leaping blaze from which had always greeted his coming, and then they wandered to the wheel she had been wont to twirl so fast when flax came, bought by the money rich English people sent in bad seasons to replace the nets lost in the storms, or rent by the steamers when they had to hug the shore.

Ah! she might spin again, but not for him! He would never sit again beside the fire, or in the doorway in the sunlight making his nets. He was gone, and she left alone—alone—alone.

As she thought of the new-made grave on the hillside, of the mournful resting-place up beyond "The Commons," where the silence was unbroken even by the rippling of the waves, or the wash of the sea fretting over the pebbly shore, her tears welled up afresh, and, covering her face with both hands, she cried as if her very heart would break.

She was so buried in her grief that she did not at first hear a knocking at the front door, which opened directly out of the kitchen on to a "causeway" of stones, laid down roughly to form a sort of footpath from the street.

It was repeated twice ere it caught her usually quick ear, now dulled by sorrow; but then she crossed the kitchen, pushed back the bar she had put up, and opened the door, expecting to see her only living son, or one of the neighbours.

Instead, however, of any person, gentle or simple, with whom she was acquainted, there stood on the threshold a total stranger, a well-dressed man, carrying in his arms a child, and followed by a little boy.

"Does Mrs. Donnan live here?" he asked; and she knew instantly, as she said afterwards, "he was a 'foreigner' by his tongue."

"I am Mrs. Donnan," she answered, in a voice heavy with weeping.

"May I come in," he said.

"Surely, Sir, though it is a sorrowful house you are entering. I have buried my husband to-day," she went on, with a touching quiver in her words. "Will you be pleased to sit down off your feet, Sir," she added, dusting a chair, and setting it forward for the stranger, who stood, looking grave and grim, in the fitful firelight.

"No; I won't sit down, thank you," he said, glancing as he spoke curiously round the poor cabin; at the rude furniture; at the dresser, set out with a few plates and basins; at the nets hanging against the wall; at the earthen floor; at the absence of everything he had been accustomed to consider the mere necessities of life. "You had a daughter once, I think."

She looked at the children, and understood now what was coming, what had come, but she only answered, "Yes, Sir."

"She went off with a young officer stationed at Belfast."

"That was so, Sir."

"She died some time ago."

"Five years come Martinmas. Five long years. Sir, did you know her?"

"These are her children," he said, not answering the question she put.

"And where is their father?" he asked.

"He is dead, too;" and as he spoke the stranger laid the child he carried on a settle beside the fire. "She is fast asleep," he added, turning with a relieved look towards the

newly-made widow, and apparently considering the worst part of his errand was done.

"Are you going to leave them here?" she asked.

"Of course; there is no where else for them to go."

"And who sends them here—who are you?" There was a ring of defiance in her tone, and a light in her eyes in which a few minutes before tears had been glistening, that warned the visitor it would be wise to bring the interview to a close.

Before he answered, he came close up to the only table the kitchen boasted, and, putting his hand in the breast pocket of his coat, drew out a purse.

From it he extracted a piece of folded paper, which he held in his fingers as he spoke.

"I am butler in the family of General Pryor; and his wife, Lady Lucy, bade me bring the boy and girl to their grandmother, and give you this hundred-pound note she sends—not because my Lady recognises any claim your daughter's children can possibly have upon her, but only out of her Ladyship's goodness and consideration."

Saying which he laid the note down, walked to the door, opened it, and went out into the night.

For a few seconds Margaret Donnan stood stunned; then, catching sight of the money, she snatched up the note and rushed after Lady Lucy's messenger.

He must have walked very fast, for he had passed through the hamlet and got to the top of the short lane leading to the high road, and was about to enter a post-chaise, which waited for him, when she came up panting and breathless.

"Stop!" she said to the postillion; and she put her arm inside the door to prevent its being closed against her. "Here is your money," she went on speaking to General Pryor's butler. "Your mistress may be a great lady, but she is a bad woman. Whether my daughter was wronged or not, God only knows. She said she was married; but, however that may be, I'll take no money from one of your people. Does she think to pay me for my child's shame?"

The bank-note fluttered to the bottom of the chaise. She took away her arm, and, banging the door, turned the handle. "You may go on now," she cried to the postillion; and then she set her face towards the sea, and went down the narrow lane, sobbing every step of the way. She could not control her grief even when she re-entered her cabin, but sat down beside the table, weeping as she had not wept when she saw her husband brought home dead and knelt beside his coffin.

Presently there came the soft touch of a child's hand upon her own—the timid voice of a child in her ear.

"Don't cry; please, please don't cry;" and two little arms were twined about her neck; and, looking up, she saw that a boy with a face like an angel was mingling his tears with hers.

"Mother," said a third person at this juncture, "what has happened? Whose children are these?" and a great strapping fellow closed the door and strode across the room.

"Maggie's," she answered. "The father's dead, and his people will have none of them, and they have sent them home to bring disgrace on us all; and the man that brought them wanted to leave a hundred-pound note, but I'd have none of it. I ran after him and gave it back, and told him to tell his Lady Lucy I would not take her money as the price of my daughter's shame."

"Hush!" said the young man, sternly. "I would not speak like that if I was you, and before the innocent children, too. I am glad you did not keep the money though," he added, in a different tone. "We'll make shift not to let them want, somehow, please God. Who can tell? It will, maybe, turn out, somehow, they have come as blessings in disguise. What do they call you, my lad?" he asked, turning to the boy.

"My name is Norman," answered the child; "and this is Maggie, and she is always crying for her papa."

CHAPTER II.

More than a year had passed since the day of Robert Donnan's funeral, and it was the very height of summer when Widow Donnan and one of her neighbours set out for a farmhouse near Bella Hill, where their services were engaged for the day.

"Then you'll be a good boy, Norman?" she said, before she went.

"Aye, Granny."

"Good boys don't say, 'Aye.' What do they say?"

"Yes, Granny;" this shyly, and with a pretty drooping of the fair curly head.

"And you'll take care of Maggie?"

"Yes, Granny," with a smile, as if the idea of not taking care of Maggie was the finest joke imaginable.

"And you'll both go to your school and take your 'piece' with you; and you know where to find the key when you come back, and there is milk on the shelf and some griddle bread I've left buttered for you, and play yourselves nicely along the shore or wherever you like when you have learned your lessons—only don't go trailing off with Willie Craig. Promise me, Norman, dear, you won't be led away by him."

"No, Granny; I'll do all you bid me."

"And if I'm not back by eight, put Maggie to bed, but don't sit up yourself after you hear the nine o'clock bell. You'll be a good boy, won't you, dear?"

"Yes, Granny, I'll try," and he lifted his sweet young lips to receive the farewell kiss, which seemed just as grateful to him as though the giver had been beautiful and rich and noble, instead of being what she was, a poor wrinkled old woman, born and bred in the lower ranks of life, whose acquaintances were all working people as badly off as herself.

"Won't you give me a kiss too, Norman?" asked Mrs. Donnan's companion, who was standing close at hand; but the boy shook his head, and drew his sister a little nearer to him.

"Norman likes to keep all his kisses for his granny," explained that relative.

She had not any fear about leaving her charges alone. Better children never existed—quieter, nicer, more amiable. From the very first they ate the humble fare which was all she could give them without a murmur; they went to school obediently; they learnt quickly; they did what they were told, and they wandered about together hand clasped in hand.

Regarded with compassion on account of their questionable birth; nevertheless, by reason of their father's position and the "great people" belonging to him, a certain amount of romance and mystery attached itself to the little waifs. If they were "nobody's children," they were everybody's. Not a creature but had a kind word for them, from the school-mistress down; not a person but hoped good fortune would in some vague way come to them. They were so simple and yet so unlike other children, so contented and yet so shy and reserved, so different in their talk and look and manner from the boys and girls they lived amongst, that many persons said it was a sin and a shame not to try to make their father's friends do something for them.

Long previously the boots they wore when General Pryor's butler brought them to Bonnybefore had dropped off their feet, and those which replaced them were so hard and clumsy they felt glad to lay them aside, and, save in school hours and on Sunday, run like their companions shoeless and stockingless along the sands. Their grandmother had a hard struggle to

keep them; but she managed it somehow, with occasional help from her son, who had his wife and family also to maintain, and now and then a tidy frock or piece of flannel or a few yards of calico from some one of the kind ladies who lived in Carrickfergus and its neighbourhood. There was no disgrace about accepting such gifts bestowed as simple matters of course by those who were better off on those who were worse.

Nothing to hurt the pride of the latter, or to flatter the vanity of the former. Margaret Donnan had no heart throe when she dressed her little grandchild in some garment Miss at one of the big houses had outgrown. She would not have asked for such help; but when it came as it did, like the rain or the dew or the sunshine, she took it and felt thankful.

So far as she knew how, she tried to prevent the children deteriorating in speech or manner. She trained them more like a conscientious nurse than a grandmother. She was eager for them to learn, anxious for them to keep their pretty ways. Poor soul! it was touching to watch her striving to make the best of their poor clothes, rebuking them for solecisms of language, bidding them behave nicely.

Ah! who knew? Far down in the depths of her lonely heart she perhaps nourished a hope they might some day emerge from obscurity and require those words and manners the gentry thought so much of. She could not write herself, but she felt proud when her grandson showed her a fair copy, and she was very glad to find it embodied St. Paul's statement—"Evil communications corrupt good manners," a truism she immediately indorsed with a pointed and uncomplimentary reference to her *bête noire* Willie Craig, who was at once the ne'er-do-well of the hamlet and the haunting horror of her life.

He had seduced her grandson to the giddy heights of the Gobbins, and frightened Maggie almost to death in the dark laurel-shaded alleys of Kilroot. If there was any mischief going, he was either ringleader or sole perpetrator. Various, he was styled "a young devil," "a limb," "an imp," "a heartbreak," according to the taste and sex of the speaker. He exercised a fascination over his companions a better lad might have tried in vain to gain. Though Norman was not fond of him, he admired him with an admiration bordering upon fear.

But Mrs. Donnan's mind was at ease about Willie Craig as she trudged northward. Her grandson had promised to be good, and not allow himself to be drawn away by that arch enemy of mankind.

"And you may be just sure of that boy," said the poor woman to her companion; "if he says he will do a thing, more especially when he has his sister to take care of. It's wonderful the love they bear one another."

School was over; the long summer day wore on apace. The children ran home and ate their oaten cake, and drank the milk left for them, and learned their lessons side by side, and then started. The tide was ebbing then from the shore.

As they went Willie Craig met and vainly tried to seduce them to go with him and steal some fruit from a garden he had been reconnoitring.

"There is only a hedge, he explained, "and the people are all away for the day to Belfast; and there are big amber gooseberries, and strawberries, and raspberries, and currants; and there is a tree of apples nearly ripe, and white cherries. Come along. I'll go in; and you need only look on."

But they would not go. The boy held his sister's hand a little tighter as he saw her eyes open when one delicacy after another was mentioned in a way to tempt the heart of any child.

"I promised Granny," he said, shortly. "Come, Maggie, and we'll look for alabaster."

They went far out on the dark sands to the place where the alabaster was found. They picked up mussels, and periwinkles, and little crabs, and shells, and pebbles; they waded through shallow pools, and plashed in the very margin of the water; they piled up sand and called their mound a castle; they wrote letters for the sea to obliterate; then when they grew hungry they ran home and would have had some more oat-cake, but that a kindly neighbour who was baking giddle-bread called the children in and gave them each a "bannock" buttered hot, and some new milk fresh from the cow.

By the time their simple meal was finished the tide was flowing, so they did not go out again upon the sands. Surely, swiftly, the water was coming in, covering the alabaster pits, and the shell-fish, and their splendid castle, and their initials, and the prints of their childish feet.

"We'll go a bit along the shore, Maggie," said the boy; and so they went, their faces set eastward, and the glory of the western sky shining like molten gold behind them—on, and still on, till they rounded the nearest point and came to a tiny bay, or rather indent of the shore, where they seated themselves on a huge stone.

"That's the gentleman's nice boat," remarked Maggie, pointing to a yawl drawn up on the beach—a yawl newly painted red and white and green—affording a strong contrast to the dark, dingy-looking fishing-smacks the child knew best.

"Yes; should you like to look at it close?"

She got up instantly and put her little hand in his.

"One, two, three—and away we go," cried the boy; and away they did go: arrows from a bow could not have sped more swiftly.

They examined the pretty boat all over. She lay high and dry at the moment, but, in view of the flowing tide, was moored to a ring sunk in a rock close by the bank. Upon this rock the children climbed; then they clambered into the boat, and sat for a while in the bows stealing a fearful joy—for they knew they ought not to be there—and somehow the earth and the sea and the sky looked different in consequence. After a little they got down into her bottom so as to be screened from observation, and then all at once Maggie's eyes grew heavy, closed, and she fell asleep.

But a poor little baby after all—only six years of age, guarded by a boy who had lived in this world scarce two years more. He watched her a short time, then his own head sank, and, lying with the rays of the setting sun falling full athwart them, the brother and sister wandered through dreamland side by side. They had not been long asleep before a face peeped over the gunwale of the boat.

"I'll give you young ones a fright," said the owner of it, and with quick deft fingers Master Willie Craig loosened the rope, which attached the boat to her moorings, and, laughing low and mischievously, sat down at a little distance to watch. Ere long, however, he found it slow work waiting for the coming of the tide, and ran on to meet the waves as, grandly, and with a majestic leisure, they swept in upon the shore. Then he went a little westward, keeping just where the water, as it lapped in over the sand, could wet his feet. When this amusement palled he began to feel hungry, and thought he would go home and get a piece of bread, by which time the sea would be flowing in nicely, and getting quite close up to the boat.

The sun was sinking to rest behind the distant hills: the water looked under his beams like a sheet of molten gold. Some vessels were lying almost becalmed over towards the county Down side of the lough; the green heights on the opposite shore seemed fair to those gazing upon them from the Antrim shore; the quiet twilight came on apace; the little hamlet sank into repose, and still the children slept on whilst

the sea crept nearer and nearer—came crawling surely, if slowly, across the sands, covering the pebbles and shells, up the shingle, over the large stones, almost to the very bank where, amongst grass and nettles, wild flowers grew.

When they woke it was dark, and they were not safe with Granny at home. For a moment they did not realise where they were; but after he had rubbed his eyes the boy said,

"We fell asleep in the yawl, Maggie. Wake up, dear; we must make haste and run back."

As he spoke, he rose and found the boat rocking under them. "The tide has got round it," he thought; and laid a hand on Maggie to prevent her clambering out.

"Wait a minute!" he exclaimed, "till I go first;" and he scrambled to the bows and began feeling for the rope. It was there, but offered no resistance to his touch. He could see no rock, no bank, no anything, but water all around. The tide had come up, and the yawl was parted from her moorings, and they were afloat—two little waifs upon the desolate sea.

CHAPTER III.

The English steamer was just entering the lough, making her way against an ebb tide, when the look-out reported that far to starboard an empty boat was drifting down towards Channel. No lovelier morning had ever dawned upon the earth. The sun streamed over the varied scenery which makes all that coast seem but a perpetual panorama of striking contrasts.

As usual, the steward and stewardess had informed the passengers, "We are now in the lough;" and already in the cabins dressing operations were in full progress; whilst very experienced travellers had for some time been walking up and down the quarter-deck and getting all the benefit to be derived from the very early morning air.

"An empty boat!" In a moment glasses were raking the horizon. Far away lay the gloomy Gobbins, with its thousands and thousands of seagulls dotting each rocky projection and winging their flight to the little island lying close beside. On the one hand the coast swept off northward towards Larne; on the other, the most desolate portion of the county of Down stretched bleak and barren into the sea.

At its entrance the lough is very wide; and as the English steamer, according to its wont, hugged the southern side, the frail bark drifting into the Channel looked a mere speck upon that glorious expanse of sea.

"She is not empty"—it was the pilot who spoke. He had not long come aboard, and his craft with the black spot on the white sail was being towed astern. "I see a signal flying. Look! lower, lower—sink the glass a bit more! There! Do you make it out now?"

In a minute the steamer's course was altered, and right across the lough those on land beheld her smoke disappearing as she bore fast down towards the Antrim coast, getting into the route which should have previously been traversed by the Scotch boat, had she not chanced to be late.

By this time the deck was crowded with passengers; every available glass had been put in requisition. As the steamer gained upon the little craft, the excitement on board became more and more intense; and when at last the mate said, "Why, there's two children in her!" there came a hush of suspense while the vessel rushed through the water, and orders were given for a boat to be lowered and manned the instant the paddles stopped.

How those sailors rowed! Was ever any sight fairer than the sweep of their oars as they pulled faster and faster? the spectators could see they almost lifted the boat out of the water with every stroke; the spray glistened like drops from a fountain as it dripped in prismatic colours from their oars. They were close on the yawl now, they shot ahead, and then waited for it to come abreast; one of the men laid hold of the gunwale, while another made fast the rope. With their strong arms they lifted the children into their own boat.

A cheer rang out from the steamer across the glittering water. Hats were waved, handkerchiefs floated in the light summer breeze. A few minutes more and two little creatures rescued from the jaws of death stood upon the deck of the steamer surrounded by a group of eager questioners.

They did not appear very much frightened. The boy looked somewhat pale, and there were dark circles round his eyes; but the girl, with her sun-bonnet pulled well over her pretty little face, only seemed abashed to find herself amongst so many people, and stood tracing patterns nervously with a bare pink toe, as if she were standing on the familiar sands once more.

The boy told his story—how their grandmother had gone away for the day, and how when evening came they climbed into the boat and fell asleep, and never woke till it was dark night and nothing all about but water, how he shouted till he was hoarse, how he knew they floated up the lough because he saw the lights of the cutter anchored off Carrickfergus, and the Castle and the shadow of the Knockagh; and then when the tide turned they turned with it, drifting with the currents, but ever and always getting towards the open sea.

"I was glad," he said, simply, "when day began to break. I thought then somebody might see us."

"But through all those hours of darkness what did you do, or think of?" he was asked, which question he failed to answer; he looked down for a moment, and then out seaward, with a wistful trouble in his face more eloquent than words.

"Were not you frightened, dear?" said a lady to the little girl. She lifted her head, and under the battered sun bonnet were seen such a pair of lovely eyes, such a rose tint in the round, velvety cheeks, such pearls of teeth within the sweet childish mouth, that a murmur of admiration went round.

"No," she answered shyly, with a beautiful smile.

"She thought she was going to see her papa," explained the boy; "didn't you, Maggie?"

"Yes." And she turned to him with a smile lighting up her whole face.

"And where is her papa?" someone inquired; but again the boy made no reply; he only took the little sunburnt hand and held it tightly in his own.

"Sure they're two poor desolate orphans," said a sailor in the background at this juncture. "I have seen them often, the creatures. They live with their old grandmother, and more shame for them as threw such a burden on a woman who had a handful of trouble without naving to work for a pair of helpless infants."

It was the mate who spoke; he came from Eden, a village somewhat further on the road to Larne, and had the whole story pat enough.

He told it, when pressed, briefly and yet dramatically; he pictured the widow sitting in her lonely home and the servant of the proud, heartless lady breaking in on her sorrow with the children and the hundred-pound note, "which she threw into the chaise after him as if it was dirt."

"And there's many a one believes the father and mother was married," he finished; "and that, if anyone could see into the matter, the children might get their rights."

"Meantime, it is very hard upon the old grandmother," said a kindly-faced gentleman; "and so I propose that we make up a little sum to send her. If you, Sir," addressing the

Captain, "will take charge of whatever may be subscribed, you may put me down for five guineas." There was quite an eager stir amongst the passengers; long before the children had been taken down into the cabin to have some breakfast it was evident those on deck did not mean them to be landed at Carrickfergus empty handed. At that moment an elderly man, who had taken no part in the conversation, asked the Captain if he could speak to him alone for a moment.

They walked astern, and when they were near the wheel the Captain paused and said, stiffly, "Yes, Sir."

"I do not want you to take any money from those people. Stop the collection."

"I don't see how I can do anything of the sort, Sir," was the answer; "and, to be plain with you, I don't see why I should."

"I can tell you why," said the other, his features working with irrepressible emotion; "because the dead father that innocent child believed she should soon see was my son."

"Whew!" said the Captain, with a long whistle of amazement, and plunging his hands deep into his pockets he took a few turns in order to tranquillise his mind.

"I was on my way to find this Mrs. Donnan," went on General Pryor. "The children were sent to her without my knowledge. Till quite lately I knew nothing about them, or of their father's marriage—"

"Then the girl was married—that's a good thing," said the Captain, and his face grew radiant with pleasure.

"Set me ashore with the children, and then explain how matters stand to your passengers."

"I will, Sir, with the greatest pleasure."

"Thank you," said General Pryor, and he put out his hand and shook the Captain's thankfully.

Margaret Donnan sat over the fireless hearth rocking herself backwards and forwards, and mourning as one who could not be comforted. No trace or tiding of the children! She had sought them high, she had sought them low; all the neighbours had joined in the quest; all the children had scoured the shore; and then, somehow, the truth leaked out, and Willie Craig, frightened and repentant, told his story of how he had loosed the rope to give Norman and Maggie a fright, and then gone away and forgotten all about them.

Very soon there were willing hearts and strong arms shoving out boats to go in search of the children, but Margaret herself felt hopeless.

"First one, then another," she muttered; "and now Maggie gone, and her brother, too."

But even as she spoke, there came a rush of rapid footsteps over the earthen floor.

"Granny, Granny, Granny!" said the boy, throwing his arms round her neck and bursting into a flood of tears. "We are here, both of us; Maggie is behind with a gentleman who says he is our papa's father."

Even as the boy spoke his grandfather entered, leading Maggie by the hand, and stood uncovered in the middle of the earthen floor a stately gentleman. Obedient to her lifelong instinct of respect for her betters, Margaret Donnan arose when she saw him, but there was an angry defiance in her voice as she said—

"You have come to take the children from me, I suppose?"

"No," he answered; "I have come to ask forgiveness for me and mine—to say your daughter was my son's lawful wife, and that having heard the story of your love and your devotion, I am here to tell you the children shall stay with you or be taken by me, just as you decide."

She remained for a minute silent—the sunshine streaming through the open door glorifying her humble dress, and shining on her tear-stained face, lifted in grateful thanksgiving to Heaven; then she said—

"You have brought me more, Sir, than houses or lands—the good name of my dead daughter. May God Almighty bless you for it. No; I won't stand in the children's way. If it is for their welfare, I can part with them; though— She turned aside and went out into the bright morning, sobbing bitterly.

Space will not permit me to tell of all the prosperous sunshine which flooded the evening of that honest life. General Pryor took the children; but year by year he brought them back to visit their grandmother in the cottage he bought for her, a cottage covered with roses and jasmine and set upon a little knoll, which commanded a view of the lough and the County Down, the hills softly blending with the sky, and the castle stretching out into the sea, and all the fair country round about. She lived to see Maggie's husband and Norman's wife, and to hear Willie Craig—that "terribly bad boy," as the neighbours called him, whom she had taken to her own home when all his own friends died in the time of a virulent fever—say, "I am captain of a schooner now, Mrs. Donnan, and I owe all to you."

THE VICAR'S DAUGHTERS.

(See Illustration, page Eight.)

I.

One dull, foggy day in December,
When biting and bleak was the air,
I once lost my way, I remember,
And paused in a quaint City square.
Though lacking all splendour or gladness,
The flavour of good long ago
Clung close to the place in its sadness
And grave-yard half covered with snow;
While the black, puny branches, all leafless and bare,
Seemed to add to the gloom of this dull City square!

II.

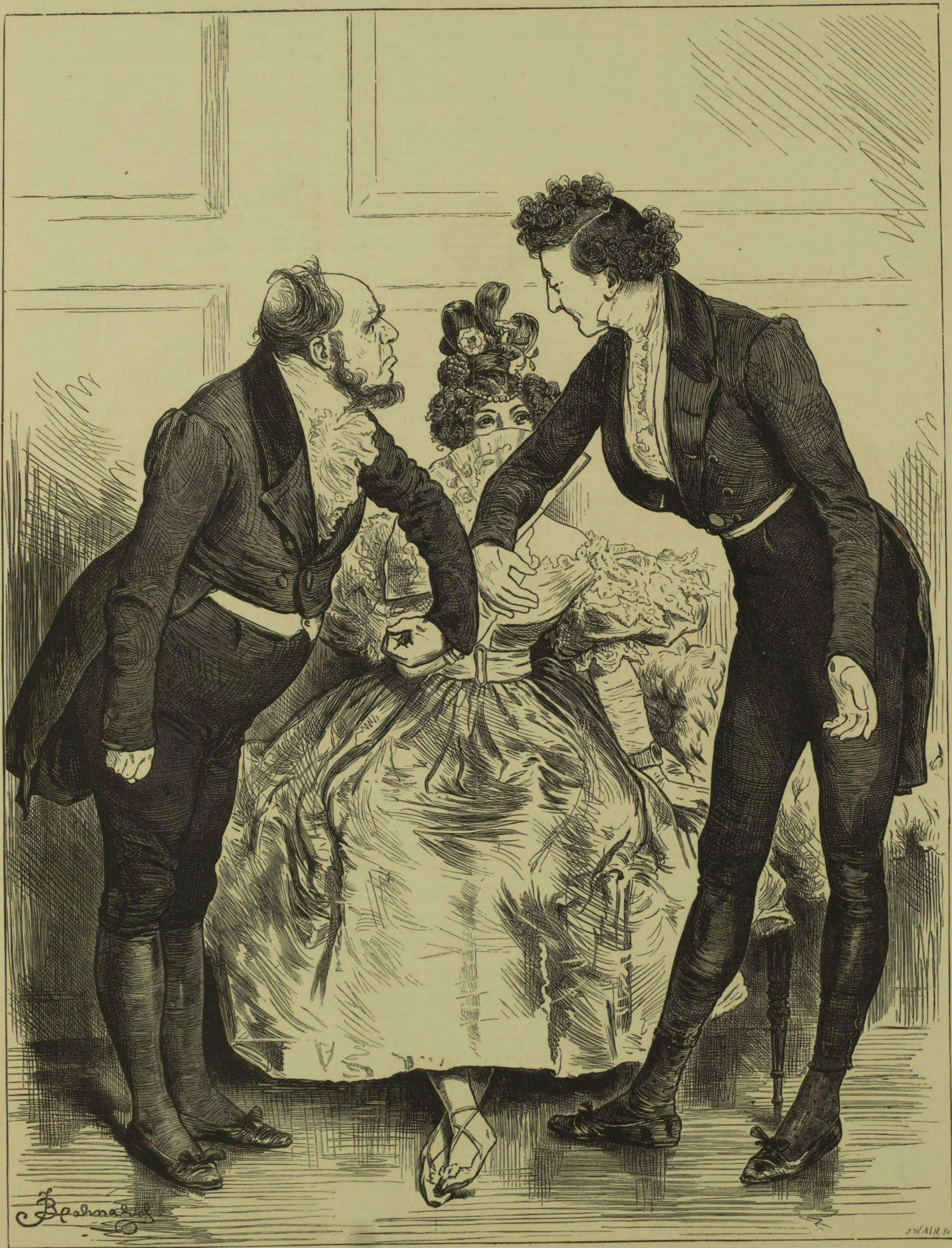
The railings were rusty and rimy,
The church looked so mouldy and grim;
The houses seemed haunted and grimy,
The windows were gruesome and dim.
The iron gate creaked on its hinges,
The clock struck a querulous chime,
As though it were feeling some twinges
It had been forgotten by Time.
But I opened the door, and the picture was fair,
In the fine ancient church, in this sad City square!

III.

A fair little lass, holly-laden—
With eyes of cerulean blue—
Is helping a sweet dark-eyed maiden
Twine ivy with laurel and yew;
How busy the deft taper fingers!
What taste and what art they display!
How lovingly each of them lingers,
Adjusting a leaf or a spray!—
I closed the door softly, I've no business there,
And drift out in the fog of the grim City square.

J. ASHBY-STERRY.

A DOMESTIC DRAMA



Barnard

SWAIN 51

ACT I.—THE CHOICE
(BETWEEN WORTH AND WEALTH).
DRAWN BY F. BARNARD.

IN TWO ACTS.



ACT II.—THE VICTORY
(OF WORTH OVER WEALTH).

DRAWN BY F. BARNARD.

AT THE TWELFTH HOUR.

BY R. E. FRANCILLON.

CHAPTER I.

The ground was as hard as iron, the sky blue as turquoise, the sunshine yellow as gold, and the air as still and as silent as only the hardest of frosts can be. Nobody, for weeks past, had dared even so much as to dream of a fox—it was Reynard's Holiday. Had things been as they ought to be, Rupert Grayshaw would not, late in the afternoon, have been found upon only two legs instead of four. Things being as they were, he was making the best, or the worst, of them by walking briskly along a winding lane that led from the village of Combe Bassett to nowhere in particular, at the rate of something over four miles an hour.

Rupert Grayshaw was going on for three-and-thirty years old, full of strength and life, handsome and something more. Few people noticed how fine a face he really had until they came to know him well, for those who saw him for the first, second, or third time were struck exclusively by all such signs and symbols of both mental and vital force as would have made plainness forgotten. He was a man who looked both eager and able to enjoy the whole of life all round, with body, brain, and soul. And assuredly, though the foxes were safe, it was a day on which life could be most amply and actively enjoyed. I need make no mystery about Rupert Grayshaw, for there was none to be made, and though, no doubt, he had his secrets and his private affairs like other men, he was known, on the whole, rather more openly than most of one's friends. He was the only son of the younger son of an old Yorkshire family; he had taken high mathematical honours at Cambridge; he was a Fellow of St. Kenneth's; he was without near relations; he had no profession, but lived on his Fellowship, and, without sacrificing any pleasures that were open to him, had, with an enduring enthusiasm, adopted scientific investigation and discovery for a career. He held himself as much above and beyond marriage as science is above the brewing of small beer. He had come to Combe Bassett on a visit to his father's old friend, Dick Derwent, for the sake of the coverts; and, so far as the coverts were concerned, had come in vain. And that is his whole history, as completely told as any man's can be—from the outside.

The lane presently led through a thick but now brown and leafless wood. Rupert vaulted over a stile to the left, and his feet were soon enjoying the never-palling delight of trampling and crunching over fallen and frozen leaves. He was glowing with health and exercise, and, it might be, with some still more peculiar joy. The wood was a maze of paths, but he either knew their clue by heart or else gave himself up to chance more decisively than most men go towards a known goal. And so, either by accident or design, he reached at last a solitary cottage standing in a small garden and nearly hidden among the trees. It was a humble place enough—a little, but not much, better than the common run of labourers' dwellings in that part of the country—low, rough-cast, and straw-thatched, with small latticed windows and immensely deep eaves. The long strip of garden was given over to vegetables, except a patch in front of the porch, where it was not hard, though in midwinter, to conjure up, in fancy, a little wilderness of full scents and strong colours. Some style was given to the place, even now, by the creeper with evergreen leaves and scarlet berries that covered the porch, and the thick ivy that darkened the lower windows. As if he knew its inmates and all their ways, Rupert went to a window at the side of the cottage and tapped thereon three times. Then he leaned against a pear-tree and waited patiently.

Or perhaps impatiently. For presently the lattice opened, and like a live portrait set in a frame of ivy leaves appeared a face that seemed to say, "Ah! he has a Secret in his life, after all—and I am She!"

Yes, when a man comes to look for Foxes and finds Frosts, he must find something wherewith to fill up his idle days—something or somebody. Of course it is unlucky when it happens to be Somebody instead of Something—when he has both publicly and privately forsworn marriage, and when, if he forswear himself, he must give up the means of study and take to bread-winning instead of working for science and glory. Perhaps it is rash for men to take long holidays until they are at least seventy years old. For if ever there was a face made to come between a student and his books, between a sportsman and his sport, between a sworn bachelor and his vow, it was the face that Rupert had called from out the ivy as if his three taps had been spells. It was a very young girl's; she could not possibly have been more than seventeen. But her number of years was to be gathered from the indefinable expression of girlhood rather than from any palpable signs. She was neither child nor woman, but blent in one face the charms of the two. The delicate glory of perfect health breathed from her; the biting air did her no wrong, but merely deepened the glow on her cheek that proved no frost to lie within. She could be called neither dark nor fair, but simply harmonious; and so quick were the changes of light and shade that Rupert seemed to hear her looks with some subtle inner sense as if they were the melody of a song. And, whatever else the words of that song might be, they were at least gentle and pure. Why need I describe her feature by feature, line by line? Enough that passing and heedless eyes would have called her lovely, while Rupert's as clearly found her a great deal more.

She was no cottager's daughter, though she was found in this out-of-the-way, almost hidden cottage. She suggested one of those lost princesses whom travellers find by chance among woodcutters and charcoal-burners in the forests of fairyland. All things favoured the fancy—the brown, dark, windless wood; the blue sky, the silence, and the loneliness everywhere. She herself had not spoken, except with a smile; and, after a moment of such greeting, shut the window again. But Rupert, having had his answer, went to the door, raised the latch, and entered. And then he seemed to turn over another page of a fairy tale. He passed through an ordinary kitchen, with an open chimney and a brick floor, with nothing out of the common about it except that it was empty on so hard a day, when labour had nothing to do but sit and rest by its own fireside. But the room into which he passed out of it was very different indeed; in such a place it was even startling to find such a room. It might have been a boudoir of any great lady in the land, if it had not been so obviously an enchanted maiden's bower. In that country of Once upon a Time, soft carpets, fine hangings, luxurious upholstery, books, and pictures cost nothing more than a few waves of a wand, or else their presence here would have seemed something more than strange. And here she, whose face we have for a moment seen, ran forward to meet Rupert quickly and joyfully, and let him take her in his arms.

"I have good news, Bertha!" said he. "And you will never guess it. The post, this very morning, brought me the news that I am rich enough for all things—for You, and Work, and Gladness, and all life means to me: for You and Love, above all! Yes, my darling, it's true. I shall be able to give

you a better bower even than the mysterious enchanter who keeps you here in his power."

"Oh, Rupert! What has happened? What is going to happen? What do you mean?"

"Everything has happened, Bertha! A far-off cousin of my mother's, whom I never saw in my life, is dead, and has left me a fortune—an immense fortune for me and you, but not too large to be a burden—only on condition that I will change my name!"

"What!—you are not to be Rupert, my Rupert, any more?"

"Oh, I shall keep that name—that is yours! But I shall give up my Fellowship with more pleasure than I had in getting it; for I hate the least thing that has kept me from you; and there is nothing left but a form or two to keep me from my wife for another hour! When will you come to me? In two weeks?—In one?—In!"

"Rupert! Is it true?"

"All true—every word! When will you come?"

"And may I tell my father?"

"Your father! Bertha, my darling, now that I can claim you I think this mystery ought to be at an end. Just think what our story has been—a story that nobody could believe. I come down to Combe Bassett with a heart as empty as life without you. I wander into a wood—I find, by chance, in a common cottage, a Fairy Queen. I win her heart, and her troth plight, and at the end of weeks I know no more of her than that her name is Bertha—Queen Bertha—and that she has no surname, but only a mysterious, nameless father, who comes to see her, like an enchanter, from far away—flying, I suppose, on a magic carpet, or a brazen horse through the air. She is attended by invisible hands—for none but her own have I seen. I am sworn to ask nothing more than if she loves me. She forbids me to enter her bower without a signal, and unless it is answered. And yet I know that she is as innocent as the lilies, and as pure as the snow. Sooner than lose you, Bertha, I would consent to know nothing but that you are lovely, and good, and true, and that you love me: but is it in man not to wish to know more? And is it not time?"

"As if I would not tell you every thought I have in me! But, oh Rupert, how can I tell you a name I never heard? As you say, I must have another name than Bertha, I suppose it is true. As you say, my father must have some dwelling-place of his own, I suppose that is true too. And—"

"And you really do not know who you are?"

"Surely—that I am Bertha, and yours. . . . But if it is time—"

"It is time."

"Then—my father comes to-morrow, at five o'clock in the afternoon. I have told you why you must not come to me without a signal: because he does not wish to be seen, and because I do not always know when he is coming. But I do happen to know to-day when his next visit will be—for he never fails to see me on the first day of the New Year!"

"Yes—to-morrow is New-Year's Day. Well?"

"Come, Rupert, and come openly, and tell him—"

"And if he says No?"

"Why should he say No? And—if he does—do I not love you? He cannot forbid that, Rupert!"

"My darling! I will come, Enchanter though he be."

Rupert left the cottage just in time to reach the Hall (as his host's place was popularly called) before dinner. He met nobody on the way but an old woman in a blue cloak, of whom he took no special heed—for what were all outward things to a man who loved, and was loved, and before whom the future was opening out in rainbow colours? Even the mystery of his love-story gave it an additional charm to him, whose imagination, chronically kept in the grooves of hard study, needed now and then to take a flight into the free and open air.

There were not many guests at the Hall. Dick Derwent was a bachelor of five-and-forty, who did not care to fill his house for the sake of having it full. The few who were there were men who were waiting for the frost to break, and with whom Rupert—engaged as he was with his own affairs—had but little sympathy. He liked Dick, who was the best of good fellows, and had shown him much kindness; but he cared little for Dick's friends. And even to Dick, good fellow as he was, he had never breathed a word of his love-story. There were many reasons for silence, of which each was all-sufficient for him. In the first place—until to day—marriage had, from his point of view, been simply impossible. He had been merely drifting, and had hardly cared to open his own eyes as to the course he had been taking. In the second place, to profane the mystery of his romance by speech would be sure to reduce it from poetry to prose. Again, how could he bear to tell such a story to open-hearted and free-tongued Dick, who had never kept a secret in his life, and would be sure to make Bertha and Rupert's love for her a matter of rough chaff, even if they did not some day, for want of better sport, ride out and draw the cottage with "Yoicks" and "Tally-ho?" And who was Bertha's father, and what secret might he not have that ought not, in honour, to be betrayed? Had Bertha's existence been known of at the Hall, he would himself have been the first to hear.

Dinner and billiards had lasted the evening through, when the stroke of a church bell sounded full and close through the thin air. Dick Derwent rose and filled his tumbler to the brim.

"Let all who love me, follow!" cried he, in his bluff, ringing voice. "At the first stroke of twelve, I throw open the front door with my own hands, to let the old year out and the new year in!"

Dick Derwent was a fine, stout, hearty country gentleman, with all manner of jovial ways. He was the very pink of generosity and honour. He had been Rupert's father's stanchest friend, and had, at old Mr. Grayshaw's death, transferred his affection from the father to the son. Indeed, it was more than common affection that he showed towards Rupert on every possible occasion. Though so much the elder, he had a strong belief in the prudence and worldly wisdom of the younger man, which cannot be supposed to have been altogether ill founded—at any rate, Dick Derwent was not the man to have let a hundred fellowships stand in the way of marriage had he been that way inclined. But, then, it is true he was not a man of science, but only a jolly middle-aged gentleman who kept up old customs and followed the hounds well.

The half dozen young and middle-aged men, without a woman or a child among them, gave way to their host's whim, though not without smiles and shrugs of the shoulder at taking part in such a piece of obsolete folly.

"What does it all mean?" asked West—a young man who was wiser in his own eyes even than Rupert Grayshaw was in Dick Derwent's. "Why should we trouble ourselves to let out a good time—thanks to you, Dick—and let in what nobody knows, may be death, may be marriage?"

"Marriage, eh?" said Dick, turning upon him suddenly.

"Perhaps I know more about that than you. But that's neither here nor there—marriage won't come inside this door for many a long day. That isn't what it means. It means that the master of this house has, with his own hands, let in two hundred New Years, and that I'm not going to be the first

inhospitable fellow that has been surnamed Derwent and christened Richard. Now, then—Welcome, whatever you are!" he said, loudly, as he threw open the front door and let the first cold blast of the New Year rush into the Hall. "God speed the old, and God bless the New!"

"I know it's a common custom," said Rupert, "for the master of the house to open his door at the first stroke of the last midnight of the year. But I could never find out what it means, and yet every superstition must have a meaning somewhere. I wonder what people think would happen if the New Year came to a house and found the door closed?"

"Happen?" said West. "Why, that fewer people would begin the year with a sneeze. What else do you suppose?"

"I dare say," said Dick—"I dare say they knew once upon a time. Well, it's done now, and after all it would never have done to have the frost break up everywhere else, and not round the Hall."

But the first day of the New Year did not bring a thaw, either round the Hall or elsewhere. To-day was yesterday's twin brother. Nor was Rupert sorry for it, for, had it thawed, he would have found it exceedingly difficult to invent an excuse for staying at home while the other men were all a-field. Of course, while the ground was hard it was natural enough for a philosopher to take solitary walks in company with problems. But problems when the scent lay—even a broken leg would hardly serve as an excuse for him then, after three long weeks of iron. Happily, the weather allowed him, with no more difficulty than usual, to be at the cottage by five in the afternoon. If he had believed in omens, he would have felt that his luck at least had not changed with the change of year.

He was neither shy nor timid by nature, and was eager rather than anxious for his first interview with the mysterious personage who kept his daughter so strangely confined in such an unaccountable prison. Beyond all question, Bertha was nearly as ignorant as he of her own history. She scarcely knew of any other life, except after the vague and untrustworthy manner of dreams. She was fairly well educated, for she had been thrown upon her own mental resources all her life, and had been put by this same unguessable father into the right road for using them. Oddly enough, she was most familiar with the very books and branches of knowledge that Rupert himself would have chosen for her had her education been given into his hands. She had lived in this way—so he learned from her—all her life, seeing none but her father and an elderly nurse who attended to her admirably, but told her nothing. She was under a strict discipline which she had never thought of breaking through, never going out for exercise except in the early morning in the woods, or being allowed to have a friend. Short of making inquiries, Rupert had invented a thousand theories to account for the mystery, but had rejected them all. But about one thing there was no mystery at all. No wonder that a young girl, with such infinite capacity for the life that had been withheld from her for seventeen years, had snatched at life, love, and liberty as soon as they had found her out in her solitude. She was the sleeping princess who woke when the prince had forced his way to her through the thorns.

But now, at last, the whole secret was to be disclosed. Of the result, Rupert had absolutely no fear. He was rich enough to satisfy any earthly father, and in love enough to satisfy any father, man or demon, who loved his child. His high spirits of yesterday were nothing compared with to-day's. He hardly felt the ground as he walked, but seemed to tread on air.

He reached the cottage well before five. But—

The door stood wide open, and the front garden was littered with bits of broken wood, ends of cord, and straw. The kitchen was without a fire. With a strange feeling of fear in his heart, he went at once into Bertha's bower—it had turned into nothing but a shrunken square cupboard, with four bare walls and an empty floor. The lattice was open, and the air seemed deadly cold.

Had it all been but a Fairy Dream? But it was no dream that he loved her with his whole heart—and she was gone.

CHAPTER II.

One: Two: Three:—Ten: Eleven: TWELVE!

He whom bettered Fortunes and a testator's fancy had transmuted from Rupert Grayshaw into Rupert Hildreth did not rise from his chair, or throw open so much as an inch of window at the sound. He laid down his pen—but that was all. The twelve strokes came to his ears muffled through double windows and close doors.

"I am not such a fool as that," thought he. "The old year's a great deal too good to lose, and I don't want a better. I've done for six years past with wanting more than I have, since—since—No: I've done with dreams. Perhaps they might come back if I opened the door to a change. Let those open their doors who are sick, or sorry, or sinful, or poor: not I, who am rich, and content, and sound in heart and limb and brain . . . and who knows what happened once, when I let out the one sweet dream of my whole life, and when that better waking came in through the open door! Never again. I might let in sickness, or discontent, or worse—who knows? I'll be as I am, with one long, faithful old year all to myself, that I've tried and proved. Yes, it has answered. Fevers have come with the new years, and have emptied other houses, but they have passed by my doors, that had kept out the evils of the unknown like those of a wise man. Fortunes have broken: but mine stand. Others, in the new years, have married and died; I, with the old year under my roof, am as alive and free as I was six years ago. I have seen others grow grey and wrinkled: I am near middle age—and young. Life palls on others, unless they renew it in their children: I have only myself and my books—but they are as fresh as of old. . . . Why, if there be a grain of truth in old wives' tales, to bar the new year out and to bolt the old year in means to stand still at one's best all one's days, to be for always as one is, and to fear no chance or change that comes to the rest of the world. . . . So knock on, New Year, as hard and as long as you like—you'll find one door bolted and barred against you and yours."

He took up his pen again, and worked on. It was true that, ever since that midnight of six years ago, he had practised the new superstition of keeping his front door close shut, so that no new year might find a chink whereby to creep in. For on that night of long ago he had lain down with joy and hope which the new year had, with its first touch, taken away. Perhaps—so he felt in fancy—if he had kept the new year out, Bertha and the old year would have staid with him: nor was the fancy quite so unreasonable in a man of science as it may seem, for what had Bertha herself ever been to him but a fancy and a dream? And it was true that, while the new years had brought troubles enough on others, they had left Rupert Hildreth, the scholar and chemist, undisturbed in his life and labour. With him the same old year seemed for ever to abide, until it had earned by custom an undisputed right and title to a place by his hearthstone. He and his life never knew a change, from year to year, from day to day. He lived, for quiet study's sake, in the outskirts

of the town of Rainham. One year a plague of cholera swept through the place, and broke up households—that would have been safe had they never let the old year go. But he never troubled himself about the matter, and just lived and worked on. Some thought he kept himself too much aloof in a time of trouble; and no doubt that same sad new year, while it brought death to bodies, brought good to souls. But what has he to do with the things of new years that have never come to him? Another new year had brought among its gifts a great financial crash that had been felt in most homes, but had not given Rupert Hildreth, though a rich man, a moment's doubt or fear. He had never loved a new face, or made a new enemy. From January to December every year had been one and the same.

There were some who thought him hard, cold, and selfish. Others—women mostly—could not help believing that, early in life, his heart had been broken by some great sorrow with which a woman had had to do, and that this made his days so changeless and his life so lonely and self-contained. He would have denied such a theory, had it ever come to his ears, with scorn. His treatment of new years and its effects might be but a superstitious fancy; but he lived as if he thought it based on truth and reason. Never, since that New-Year's Eve, had he seen, or even, despite of all his searching, heard of Bertha again or of anybody who had ever heard of her. And now he had shut out the threats of another new year.

He worked late, and rose late, without taking note that a new year had begun for all the rest of the world. Why should he, indeed, when it was still the old year, of years ago, for him?

It was certainly nothing particularly new, though a little unusual, that he should receive a visit from a stranger in the course of the afternoon. The card by which the visitor introduced himself was that of Mr. J. Dimond.

"Mr. Hildreth?" asked Mr. Dimond, a stiff, middle-aged man, with a professional look about him. "Then, in the first place, I have to wish you a happy new year."

"Ah—What? I beg your pardon," said Rupert, absently. "You are on business, I suppose?"

"It is odd you should expect that—very odd indeed, considering the day. It is a rare holiday that has brought me to Rainham, where I happen to have friends. But it is business, all the same; and I have taken the opportunity of doing it without wasting a day. Time has a way of flying, you see."

"Or of standing still."

"Not with me, Mr. Hildreth; not with me. Years—landmarks—and so on. I believe you were acquainted with Mr. Richard Derwent, of Combe Bassett. I have been his legal adviser for some years. Perhaps you are not aware?"

"I knew Derwent well; but I have seen nothing of him for some years—some time, I should say. I hope he is well?"

"He is dead, Mr. Hildreth. He died last November, in town. And his little girl?"

"Dick Derwent dead! Well. . . . But a little girl? Well, he was just the man to get married before he died."

"She has no mother. She died, you know, when the child was born. Well, Mr. Hildreth, to make a long story short, Mr. Derwent had two ideas—perhaps more, but certainly two. One was an unbounded trust and confidence in your prudence and honour, as his will testifies. The other was an overwhelming dread lest his little girl should grow up a prey to fortune-hunters, or be contaminated by the companionship of other girls. He believed that every girl ought to grow up alone, with no knowledge of, or communication with, the world. He had had experiences of the other sort of thing, you see, when he was a young man. So, Mr. Hildreth, knowing your prudence, your honour, your friendship for him, and your hermit-like mode of living, he leaves you a legacy of ten thousand pounds on condition that you will, as joint guardian with myself, undertake the sole and entire charge and education of the child (she living here with you) until she attains the age of twenty-four, at which age Mr. Derwent believed that a girl, properly brought up according to his views, ought to be able to run alone. She is now in the charge of an aunt, Mrs. Joy. You accept the charge of course?"

"What, I? No. No, Mr. Dimond. Without hesitation, and most decidedly, No. New years bring, and shall bring, no new things to me. What should I, a student who live alone with my books, do with a girl—a child?"

"The orphan of your friend—"

"Whom I do not need, and who does not need me. No. I closed my door last night, and I close it still. I will have nothing new in my life."

"Not—ten thousand pounds?"

"No. No, once for all." He bowed Mr. Dimond out, and went back to his work, without giving another thought of the New-Year's cunning but vain attempt to creep within his doors in the shape of a child.

It was all very well for the lawyer of fifty to speak of a grown girl of three-and-twenty as if she were no more than a child in arms. Equally reasonable was it for Rupert to argue that, since Dick Derwent was unmarried some six years ago, his orphan daughter could hardly be five years old. But there is nobody so good at keeping a secret, when he likes, as your bluff, frank, hearty, talkative, open-mannered man. Mr. Dimond knew, and thought his client's intimate friends knew also, that the Squire of Combe Bassett had married once upon a time and had been left a father and a widower within a year: nor only so, but that, surrounded as he was by society of which he was unwilling to deprive himself as he was anxious that his daughter should not share it, he had taken extraordinary precautions against the discovery of her existence till she was fully grown. His friends were mostly good fellows with no money to spend, who would swoop down on an heiress after the genial manner of their kind.

One bright, cold morning, when, in mid-winter, her own heart was overflowing with spring and joy, the old nurse who served and guarded her was suddenly dismissed; she was carried, by road and rail, many miles away from her old home, and presently her father came and took her to travel with him abroad. She could not speak to him of the dream which he had doubtlessly discovered, and had thus answered. It is to be hoped he was satisfied. She was docile and gentle, and her father was always kind—kind now, even in keeping her to himself; for she had seen all the human beings she needed to see in seeing one whom she saw no more. He need not have feared the adventurers and fortune-hunters whom he now, as if ruled by a craze, spent his whole time in avoiding. He need not even have made that will when he died, so that his hand, though dead, might still guard her from lovelessness in marriage and all lesser harm. Mr. Dimond must have been terribly right when suggesting what the Squire's own experiences of the world must have been before he settled down at Combe Bassett with the soul of a girl on his hands.

She mourned, honestly, when he died. Perhaps not the less because he had made her life so dull and empty. But presently she had to mourn for her living self, even more. She was an heiress—she had learned to hate the very sound of the word. And she was left in charge of another guardian: a hard, stern man, named Hildreth, so she heard; a recluse, who had been chosen by her father for the office because of

his being the only man in the world who could be trusted to carry out, consistently and thoroughly, her father's views. Hitherto, her life had been slavery, but love therewith. Henceforth it must be double slavery, and therewith what must needs become hate, at least on her side.

And yet it was with a strange feeling, very far indeed from pleasure or relief, that she heard from Mr. Dimond of Mr. Hildreth's decisive, almost scornful and angry, refusal of the charge that had been left to him. She had somehow expected that he would have received her for money's sake, and then, for duty's, have made her life hardly to be borne. But here was clearly a man who would neither do a kindness nor accept a duty, if they were inconvenient to him, even for ten thousand pounds. If there were to be refusals and rebellions, they ought to have come from her.

"It seems to me you have had a lucky escape, Miss Derwent," said the lawyer, when his holiday was over and he came in person to bring her news. "There is something about that fellow Hildreth that I neither like nor understand; he's not like other people at all. He refused a legacy of ten thousand pounds. That is being far too imprudent to have the charge of a young girl."

"At any rate, he is no fortune-hunter," said she. Perhaps my poor father knew that, and that was why—. And what am I to do now?"

"That's just the point, you see. The terms of the will are perfectly clear. In the event of Mr. Hildreth's refusal to undertake the charge of you—why, then, as you say, he will have proved himself very much of a fool. But, as he will also have proved that he doesn't care about money, I am—I am sorry to say—instructed to make him the offer of your hand."

"Of my hand? Of *me*?"

"Even so. And it must be done. For, if I do not, I shall lose my own legacy; and it is too much to lose. If he refuses that—but he can't be such a fool as to refuse the heiress of Combe Bassett, you may be sure. Your honoured father did know men."

"But there is something else to be said, it seems to me! How if I refuse?"

"Then he is to have Combe Bassett *without* you. You are to have enough to live in comfort while you remain single; but under no circumstances will you have anything more if you marry anybody but him. It is a cruel will, Miss Derwent; but it is a clever one for its purpose, I must say. Whatever happens, the man who marries you must marry you for love and not for fortune, you see; and"—

She heard no more. No wonder, thought she, that her father had done his utmost, alive and dead, to keep her from a world where men, as a matter of course, assumed only the meanest and most sordid motives in one another—judging, no doubt, from their own experience of their own. *She marry!* Why, if her heart and soul had not been married and widowed long ago, she would return with joy to her old prison in the wood rather than give herself to any man as an uncomfortable condition attaching to her lands and her gold. Let him who had refused to be paid for the care of her ask her for herself with her lands a hundred times—she would refuse him a hundred and one. Let him take Combe Bassett and welcome, so long as he left her free.

And then the pittance that was to be hers in case she refused—even that, according to what she had been taught of the world, would be all too much; even that might be enough to attract some man who was poorer still. Was she to be a slave to the world's meanness all her days? Her heart went back to him who had loved her wholly for herself, if there was any truth in all those magical signs of love that cannot lie. What had become of him? Where was he now? Had he forgotten her all in these years? Had he sold himself to some other woman, for gold? Like enough, being a man; and men being what she had been taught they were. But, had they never been parted, he would have loved her well enough, she knew.

Since Love had been lost, better now, even than Love, was Liberty, for that had become her all. Passionately she felt, "He shall have everything but *me*; I will not keep for myself one smallest coin that may make my No less full and whole." After all, there was under the skies another world, where men made no wills, hunted no heiresses, laid no plots or counterplots, never talked of love when they meant money, and, above all, were free. It is the world where we live without Love, without Gold, and Alone. It was the world wherein she herself had lived for her first sixteen years, where men were not, and where she had been tended as are the lilies of the field.

It was where she had had the dream of her life, and where she might—she fancied in her heart—go back, and live alone with her dream and be free. Never, since she left her hermitage, had she been happy for an hour. She had been, as it were, a wild flower transplanted into a garden, where it can only feel itself a weed, and dread the scents and hues around that others find beautiful. She had once longed for the world, as the wild flowers may for the gardens while they are unknown and far away; and now—Well, if she could not find her field again, any place would be better than the garden of the world; even the wayside.

She could not think or feel as those can who have grown up in the garden all their days. So little, or so much, had she learned that, when she heard such an everyday thing merely named and spoken as the sale, by a woman, of her hand and heart for the sake of keeping her land, she was as struck with unspeakable horror as if she had turned over the soil of a bed of roses and laid open the entrance of a charnel, black and foul. We, with our sensible bringing up, our well-regulated minds, and still better regulated hearts, may think her view of such everyday trifles a little overstrained. But then we have seen such things with our eyes; she had never so much as heard of one of them till now. Such a world was not to be lived in; there was nothing to be done but spread one's wings, and fly from it with all speed.

CHAPTER III.

It was the 12th of January, and Rupert Hildreth had not yet heard another word worth mentioning concerning his friend's orphan and her affairs. It is true he had received a letter from Mr. Dimond containing some rubbish or other about something that was to happen if he married the child when she became of age; but, as that could not happen for nearly twenty years, and as it could not possibly concern him in any way, he had naturally thrown the letter, half read, into his waste-basket, and, being deep in an all-absorbing investigation, had forgotten to send a word of answer. He worked on, without giving a real thought to such impertinent nonsense; and if another girl's form would sometimes come between him and his labour, or between his paper and his pen, he had become used to that ghost, and would even have missed it if it ever ceased wholly to come.

So far, therefore, he had made himself secure for another course of an old year which had so consistently proved good to him, bringing him no evil, and, on the other hand, increasing satisfaction with himself and indifference to all the rest of mankind. Every day he had risen at the same hour and worked on till his brain was heartily tired. Every night he insured himself a long sleep, too deep for dreams. The man, day by day, was turning into a machine; and so he willed.

On this night of the 12th he was working, as usual, and was even more than usually absorbed. It was a lonely old house in which he lived, near the town, but yet with no close neighbours. Those dark winter nights were as long and as noiseless as the heart of student could desire, even though, now and then, he might hear the rush and scream of the night mail that passed Rainham without stopping, and, every hour, the chiming of the church tower. It was more to keep out these than the rush of the train that Rupert Hildreth had double windows to all his rooms, and kept them close even in summer time;—one of his principal eccentricities was a morbid antipathy to the sound of church clocks, especially when they struck twelve.

He made his servants go to bed punctually at ten, for he liked, during his night work, to feel absolutely alone. And never, since he had settled at Rainham, had he been disturbed after that hour. At first, therefore, he could hardly believe his own ears when, late in the evening, and long after his servants were out of the way, he heard a bell ring through the house—no sound of a church clock, but within the house itself, as if such an impossible thing were happening as that somebody was pulling the bell of his front door.

It could only be fancy—such things often happen to minds so absorbed in thought that outward things often become confused and obscured, and when the senses, cut off from real sights and sounds, are compelled to find their own food. He had almost forgotten the matter, when the bell rang once more.

It must be real, then, thought Rupert, angrily. If it happened again it would wake the servants, throw the house into a tumult, and rob him of a whole night's work—and that must never be. If only to say No to somebody, he must go down himself and stop the ringing, otherwise nothing would have moved him from his desk had all Rainham been on fire.

He opened the door just in time to save himself from another ring. By the bright light of the moon, then at her full, he saw a young girl well wrapped in a cloak with her hand upon the bell.

"What does this mean?" asked Rupert, sternly. "Who are you? What do you want here?"

"I—I'm afraid," said the girl, looking round her doubtfully, "I'm afraid I've lost my way—I saw a light here, and no other house near—I came by the train—is it very far?"

"No. It is straight along the road," said Rupert, rather roughly. It was something more than annoying to be disturbed in full work, and to be rung up at such an hour for such a trifle as a lost way.

"But—is it very far?"

"There were limits to even his cultivated likeness to a machine. There seemed something strange about the girl, he thought, as she spoke thus doubtfully and wearily. She did not look like one to be rambling about alone at midnight; and though nothing concerning a stranger could possibly mean anything to him, he had not as yet wholly ceased to be a man. "I suppose," he said, "you have friends at Rainham and are on your way to them? It is not very far, but I am afraid it is both very far and very late—for you."

"No, I have no friends. I suppose there is an inn?"

"You have business, then? Nobody ever comes to Rainham without business or friends." He thought again, for it began to seem to him that there was something about her not wholly strange. "Yes," he said, "of course there is an inn; but—"

"I have to see a Mr. Hildreth to-morrow, who lives here. That is all."

"You have to see Mr. Hildreth? And what possible reason— You have to see *me*?"

"You are Mr. Hildreth?"

"That is my name. And yours?" All his sternness had returned. Had his well-trained Old Year gone crazed?

"You will know who I am," said she, sadly, and proudly, "when I tell you why I am here. It is to tell you with my own lips, before I leave such a world as this, where men buy love, and let hearts starve, that Combe Bassett is yours, every blade of grass, every stick and stone, without your having to be put to the shame of asking for the hand of one whom you refused even to look at when she could be nothing more to you than the orphan of your friend. That is all"

"He looked, almost in amaze, certainly bewildered, from her into the dark entrance through which the night wind had followed her, as little welcome as she. "Pardon me," said he, "but this is a matter with which I have nothing absolutely to do. Do you mean to tell me, whoever you are, that you are in league with those who seek to bring into my house and life the child whom I am bidden make my wife in my old age?"

"What child?"

"What else? Are you playing me some trick?"—He turned aside to light the lamp: partly to think, partly to see. "I remember—only eleven days ago some lawyer fellow wanted me to let in the New Year in the shape of a child. I refused him at the right time: it's too late now! What have I to do with Dick Derwent's child? There is an early train to-morrow: take it, and go back again. And tell those who sent you here that if wealth, and power, and glory, and wisdom, and love, came knocking altogether at my door, I would say, as I say to you—I want none of you: Go!"

"I tell you that I, Bertha Derwent, refuse."

The lamp was lighted. ONE! struck Rainham clock. And never since Rupert had lived there had he heard so loud a stroke. For it made no muffled thud through double windows, but a full, heavy boom through the open door, which Rupert had thrown open at the second ring and had neglected to close—on Old New Year's Eve!

The lamplight was on both their faces: in the ears of both boomed the bell. No chimes heralded the birth of this New-Year of theirs, though that twelfth day of January is as surely New Year's Eve for those who will as Twelfth-Day is Old Christmas Day. For those who will? well, maybe any day in the year will do as well. Only it did so happen that, when Rupert left the door ajar for a young girl to enter, he had forgotten that, where evil is to be let out, and good let in, Time is good enough to give us at least Two New-Year's Days—an Old as well as a New: or rather a New as well as an Old.

"Rupert!"

"Bertha!"

"And I refused you?"

And I barred out you when I barred out the New Years—but how could I tell? And what else have I barred out? Harm, yes—but what else? Heaven knows. One blessing—how many more?"

"Do you bar me out still?"

He looked at her—then far away, as if round the world. "Neither you, nor whatever Time may bring," said he. "This is New Year's Eve for me. Good and ill—I'll and said he, let all come: they all come from the same place by the same road. Let them all come together, so they come, at last, with you God will bless the new, and God speed the old!"

Rainham clock took a long time to strike: all this, and more had been told, when it boomed—TWELVE!



THE VICAR'S DAUGHTERS.
DRAWN BY A. HUNT.



CATARINA.
DRAWN BY LUKE FILDES, A.R.A.

The Illustrations.

WINTER.

TO A FURRED SWEET ONE.

Who can sum the charm that lies
In the depths of those brown eyes?
Eyes that keep the summer here
Though the skies are grey and drear;
Eyes that make the pallid noon
Lustrous with the light of June!
Let the boughs be black and bare
While such brightness suns the air;
Care we blossoms are away
While she makes an endless May?
As the shrill wind keenly blows,
In those clear cheeks blooms the rose;
The geranium's scarlet, plain,
In those dear lips lives again;
See, those eyebrows, arched and brown,
Never drawn by anger down,
Mated to the chestnut mist
Of that hair that so is kissed
Into golden glory, won
From the kisses of the sun;
Ah, were I that hat or feather
Which that dear head shield together!
Ah, were I the happy fur
That so closely clings to her,
That itself can softly bless
Her to comfort and caress!
Oh, thrice happy through the strife
Of the frosts and storms of life
Will he be, blessed, all above,
With the warmth of her dear love,
Which through all his griefs shall run
Radiance, turning gloom to sun.

W. C. BENNETT.

[We are indebted to Mr. W. Y. Baker, of Aspen House, Streatham-hill, the owner of L. Rossi's picture "Winter," for permission to copy it.]

CATARINA.

I.
Errant artists with pencils that capture
The comeliest faces and forms,
Say, whence that one ripple of rapture
In the eyes of this lady of storms?
Smiling under those locks Oriental—
Blue-black, and as wild as her will—
Is a brow that is wondrously gentle,
While her lips, for a wonder, are still.

II.
Catarina (for so we will name her),
Though in summers and culture a child,
Is a spoilt one, requiring, to tame her,
Occasional measures, not mild.
Could you see her with rival and suitor,
Scant need for your guide to explain
Whether Murray or punstaking tutor
How the Moors intermarried in Spain.

III.
The sun's in the rich blood that courses
Through the veins of that faintly-rosed cheek
With the speed (may we say of wild horses?)
In her moments of passion and pique;
Not the shores vexed by Biscay's wild water—
Not the home of the little mountaineer—
Can mother this leopard-like daughter
Of Spain—and of tawny Tangier.

IV.
When thy feet, Catarina, have woven
The rhymes set by tender guitars—
And good-night resolves are all cloven
By the mystical spell of the stars,
'Tis then one would dream of defiance
To custom, and whisper, sweet maid!
Of a priest, and a Spanish Alliance,
That is—if one were not afraid!

BYRON WEBBER.

THE RIVAL SUITORS.

A CONTEST BETWEEN WEALTH AND WORTH.

Sophia Winston—fifty years ago—
By suitors twain was courted.
A suitor, in those days, was called a beau;
But ill that name assorted
With Jarvis Jagers—such a vulgar snob—
Bald, ugly, fifty-seven;
But rich enough, by many a cheating job,
In all by Mammon given;
While Paul Durand, with twenty times his brains,
With half his years—'twas funny—
Could never get, by cleverness and pains,
A thousandth part his money.
But Paul had manners, and a handsome face,
A tongue of brisk persuasion;
And in the ball-room, where he showed his grace,
Won hearts by swift invasion;
Yet cared for none of them but this fair lady,
Who knew his worth of old;
To whom, as they in garden paths had strayed, he
Had oft his fondness told.

The wealth of Jagers, witless, graceless, mean,
Had gained Sophia's father—
A lazy, needy Squire, who long had been
Approaching dotage, rather—
Durand was therefore now forbid to visit,
As once, at Winston Hall.
But Love finds opportunity; and is it
Their meeting at this Ball?

Sophia sits and waits, amidst the dancing,
That partner of her choice;
But sees his odious rival first advancing,
And hears a hateful voice:
"Miss Winston, really! I shall be delighted"—
Thrust forth his awkward arm—
"To tread this dance, my steps with yours united
In Music's mazy charm?"

But, on the other side, her welcome lover,
Arriving just in time,
To Jagers speaks—her diffidence to cover—
With firmness quite sublime;
"Miss Winston, Sir, engaged herself to ME."
She laughs behind her fan;
Then, "thank you, Mr. Jagers, but you see"—
Repels the ugly man.

And quickly rising, on the arm of Paul,
Sophia steps securely.
Bearing her triumph, in that crowded hall,
Discreetly and demurely.
While that rejected suitor wildly staggers,
And swears by all his pelf,
"He'll let them know his name is Jarvis Jagers,
"Who's one"—beside himself.—O. P. Q.

THE COLOURED SUPPLEMENT.

IN WONDERLAND.

The very winning little lady whom I have the honour to present to you is evidently "In Wonderland," and as evidently absorbed in the delightful exploration of the entrancing region in question; but, unless I am very much mistaken, she is not the veritable "Alice" herself; nor is the *carte du pays* which she is studying precisely that of the pre-historic—and, indeed, super-historic land, invented or discovered by Mr. Lewis Carroll for the benefit of all children—the big as well as the little ones, all over the world. No; the dainty little damsel with the glossy brown hair and the blue necklet cannot be Alice; for the simple reason that our young friend who was once introduced by a certain Queen to a Leg of Mutton is pictorially the sole and exclusive property of Mr. John Tenniel; whereas the charming little heroine of our Coloured Engraving is, graphically, the creation of Mr. Frank Holl, A.R.A. I incline, myself, to the belief that the fair young child with the open picture-book in one hand, and the orange in the other, is Alice's elder sister—say, Minnie or Ethel, Maud or Flo. She "did" her Wonderland ever so long ago; just as, among adults, most ladies and gentlemen in polite society have "done" their Rocky Mountains and their Second Cataract, their Damascus and their Niagara, before they are thirty. Minnie—well, it may be, perhaps, for the best to call her Minnie, as all the child Minnies with whom I am acquainted are pretty and good—travelled all through Wonderland on her eighth birthday, and floated "right away" "Through the Looking Glass" before she was nine. She can tell you all about the Jabberwock and the Song of the Mock Turtle: she has grinned with the Cheshire Cat, and she is an adept at Anglo-Saxon Attitudes. But she has long since ceased to sympathise with the Hatter who "always came home to Tea," but who was so cruelly disturbed in his enjoyment of that wholesome and refreshing meal; she cares no more about the attempt to cram Dormouse into the Teapot; the terrific combat between the Lion and the Unicorn interests her no longer; and I really question whether, as things go, she troubles herself to any appreciable extent about the problem which once perplexed her so: as to whether it really mattered if the White Rabbit was too late for the Duchess's Tea Party.

My theory is that Miss Minnie has become a wanderer in quite another Wonderland—or rather in a whole Keith Johnston's Atlas of Wonderland, altogether different from (although it could scarcely be more fascinating than) Mr. Lewis Carroll's famous Companion to the Land of Cockaigne and (Child) Tourist's Guide to the Country of Prester John. For awhile, the tremendous success of these delicious centos of nonsense gave rise to grave fears touching the continued popularity of some of the oldest established favourites of the "small infantry." Goldsmith's Goody, it was understood, was shaking with apprehension in her Two Shoes at the thought of being supplanted; Cinderella's sisters tossed their heads and declared Alice to be a forward little minx; the back of Dick Whittington's Cat assumed the form of an arch, and the creature began to use the most objectionable language when placed before a Looking-Glass; Blue Beard's moustache turned pea-green with mortification; and as for the Wolf who devoured Little Red Riding Hood, that ferocious animal was heard to remark to his friend Reynard the Fox that if Miss Alice would only visit him at his little place in the Ardennes he would show her a Wonderland which (he ventured to think) would rather astonish her weak nerves. As for Jack and Jill, they were so amazed and horrified by the colossal success of Alice that they forgot to put any water in their pail when they reached the top of the hill: an act of obliviousness, however, which did not subsequently prevent Jack from tumbling down and breaking his crown, and Jill from being exemplarily chastised by her mamma "for laughing at Jack's disaster." Fortunately it all came right at last. Cock Robin, who had written an indignant letter to *Little Folks*, complaining of the "Alicisation" of juvenile literature was appeased by a statement in the columns of *Chatterbox* (supposed to have been contributed by the Kite, because he could write, or by the Hawk, because he could talk) explaining that Alice was in reality one of the Children in the Wood; while the "oldest subscriber" to *The Infant's Magazine* was ready to take an affidavit that Alice was a first cousin to—

Little Miss Perkins,
Who lov'd pickled gherkins,
So she went to the cupboard and stole some;

But found out her mistake
When her stomach did ache,
For they were so shocking unwholesome.

So peace was made all round. Jack the Giant Killer sent Alice a Valentine. Little Jack Horner presented her with a whole handful of plums out of his Christmas Pie; and even Tom Thumb the Great condescended to express his opinion, that Alice was a much more interesting personage than the Princess Huncamunca. The only Irreconcilable in the great Wonderland controversy was Mrs. Bond. Do what people would, she was not to be pacified; and this inexorable female, expressing her unutterable contempt for "your Alices and stuff," persisted in "flying in a very great rage, with plenty of onions and plenty of sage," all because the ducks declined to come and be killed when Mrs. Bond cried "Dilly!" to them. As though the ducks had not more sense than to do that.

I have not the slightest hesitation in assuming that Mr. Frank Holl's Miss Minnie, knowing her Nursery rhymes well by heart, and having long since graduated in her "Gulliver's Travels," her "Grimm's Goblins," her "Countess d'Aulnois," and her "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," and other classics of childish lore, is now intent on the enjoyment of some "pretty little kickshaws" in the way of picture-books just purchased for her by those who love her, and of whom the name is, comparatively speaking, legion. Who shall say that she may not have been gazing with rapt eyes at some of the excruciatingly funny illustrations, by Mr. Caldecott, of Cowper's "John Gilpin" or Goldsmith's "Mad Dog"? Or it is possible that the intensely humorous yet graceful and thoughtful mock-mediaeval pictures of Mr. Walter Crane have held Miss Minnie's faculties spellbound. Miss Kate Greenaway, on the other hand, may have been the enchantress who waved a pictorially magic wand over our young friend with the orange; or haply her mamma or her Aunt Judy, or her Cousin Nellie, may have been in St. Paul's Churchyard lately, and passing by that famous bookseller's shop where Messrs. Griffith and Farran now carry on the business of Benefactors of Childhood, may have purchased for Minnie's solace and delight a store of quaint, old-fashioned picture-books in modern garb—resuscitations, some of them of the identical blocks carved in the last century by the renowned Thomas Bewick, the Father of the revival of wood engraving in England. It is good to see the old woodcuts again; but their sight reminds one of the fact of how wonderfully better off in the way of pretty picture-books are the rising generation of the Victorian era than were their grandfathers and grandmothers when they were children. How meagre was the juvenile library then! How plenteously and tastefully stocked it is now! And then the Christmas Cards, and New-Year's and Birthday Cards of our Delarues and Marcus Wards! And the Valentines! The Minnie of the present epoch is assuredly in luck's way. She is made much of by everybody. There are no severe governesses, no austere schoolmistresses, nowadays. Everything is taught in a happy, kindly, sensible manner. Reading (thanks to the multitudinous picture-primers and reading-books) may be learned without tears; and there is a Royal Road to nearly every department of learning. You may even learn logic by means of polychromatic diagrams. To be sure, there are some inveterate grumblers who maintain that the Royal Roads are far too numerous, and that the Minnie of 1880 is expected to learn about ten times more during her nomenclature than was exacted from the Minnie of forty or even of twenty years ago. But we are all bound to be "awfully clever" in these days of advanced civilisation; and if Minnie does not mind her book—an artistic and æsthetic book, mind—while she is a small child she will never become a young lady of culture, capable of appreciating Mr. Du Maurier's celebrated "six marks" Japanese teapot, and filled with the noble aspiration of "living up to it."—G. A. S.

IN SIGHT OF HOME.

The mistletoe hangs near the sea-kissed sails, and the waves as they follow us, fleck'd with foam, Are bearing a vessel from sea to shore, and a dozen brave hearts to their Christmas home. Storms and sorrows are left behind with the roar and rock of the endless tide. That speeds the son to his mother's arms, and the sailor's heart to his destin'd bride. There's an answer true to the midnight pray'r, and a prospect bright for the daylight hope: Give it her, boys! for the wind is true! clear the deck and get ready the rope! Do you see that speck of an island there, the old white cliffs, and the flag that's free, Fluttered and fretted by favouring breeze that signals home to the ships at sea? Fortune and fate, we have followed them both in the hammock below, and before the mast But it's over now, the journey's done, and the weary mariner's home at last!

What shall we find when we reach the shore, with Christmas hearts and the bells in tune? Will love be true as December frost, or fickle and fall like the rose in June? Will hands be warm as our beating hearts, or home strike cold as the changing wave; Shall we sing, my lads, when the door is closed, or eek in sorrow a new-made grave? Will the wife be the same as we saw her last, kissing her hand as the sun went down, And the vessel was lost in a haze of mist, and the lights grew less of the dear old town? We have been out to the far off lands—the burning tropics, the blinding snows—And they have been snug and secure at home, praying, forgetting—well, goodness knows! A minute more, and the doubt's at rest of lover and father, of false and free; Steer hard, my lads, for the harbour-bar that separates home from the ships at sea!

It doesn't look well to be down in luck, when the Christmas bells in the frosty air Are filling the world with a sound goodwill, and freeing the heart from a blank despair. But I recall such a morn as this, when we'd hung the mistletoe made for love, Secure in the topmost spars, up there, and the fluttering ensign wav'd above. We had sailed to port on a Christmas morn to greet the woman that each lov'd best; They filled my arms with a baby boy and said my mother had gone to rest, And down to the vessel they raced—but one, she sank with a wail on her bended knee, For we told the lass, as our tears ran down, we had buried our mate in the sail, salt sea. There are sorrows and smiles in a sailor's life, there are husbands lost and children born To those who watch and to those who wait, when the ship sails home on a Christmas morn!

But cheer, my lads, as we shorten sail; put the little one quick in my arms to take A mistletoe kiss from the lips of land, and give us some luck for the sailor's sake. The dripping garments of sailors saved were the votive gifts in the days of Rome; Let ours be hope, and a sailor's prayer, when Christmas comes with a sight of Home!

CLEMENT SCOTT.

The Illustrations.

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING.

The church is quaint, and carved, and olden;
The sunlight streams in wavelets golden,
This Christmas morn,
Through stained glass scenes from Bible stories,
On ancient knights whose sculptured glories
The aisle adorn.

The rays are shed in chastened splendour
On many a dead and gone defender
Of Church and Crown;
On Lancelot, the brave Crusader,
And Guy, who slew the French invader,
And saved a town.

The manor lords in line unbroken
Rest here begirt with sign and token
Of ages past;
And dames and maidens, proud and stately;
Lie here with folded hands sedately,
And eyes shut fast.

Among their tombs the sunlight lingers,
Then hails between the anthem-singers,
And warriors grim.
For there, 'midst many a warlike relic,
Fair children sing the song angelic,
Christ's birthday hymn.

In rev'rent wapt, I pause and listen,
I watch the darting sunbeams glisten
On floor and wall;
Then pass from dead to living graces,
And on the children's happy faces
In splendour fall.

This song of peace—these gentle voices,
These glad young hearts that life rejoices,
My fancy thought,
Are dearer homage to the Master
Than all the Church's foes' disaster
These dead knights wrought.

Gone are the days of gloom and error,
Love's sceptre breaks the rod of terror
In our fair isle.
And as the children sing His message
Of Peace on Earth the joyful presage,
They win God's smile.

GEORGE R. SIMS.

THE CARELESS NURSE.

I.
Pretty maid, pretty maid,
Walking by the sea!
Shy and staid, shy and staid
As a maid can be.
Push the little cart along:
Baby knows she can't go wrong
Lulled by such a nurse's song,
Cosily!

II.
Who is this, who is this,
Stealing by your side?
All in sailor-blue he is,
Trousers flapping wide.
Whispers, as he walks along,
(Such a voice can say no wrong),
"Baby doesn't want your song—
Sing to me!"

III.
Far away, far away
Hums unheard the sea!
From her "shay" Baby may
Thrown headforemost be!
Careless goes the nurse along,
Only hears one magic song.
Baby thinks it very wrong—
So do we!

EDWARD ROSE.

WOODLEIGH GRANGE.

A most serene December day,
Delicious as in genial May;
The west still radiant with the glow
Left by the Sun, now sunken low;
While in the east, ere day is done,
The Moon begins her course to run,
Full-orbed and clear, whose silvery light
Will make a gentler day of night:
On such a Christmas Eve as this,
When Day and Night, sweet blending, kiss—
The twilight's most ethereal sheen,
A soft, clear light of golden-green;
And steeped each hallowed, gracious thought
In glory from the Morrow caught,
I looked once more on Woodleigh Grange—
Since last I saw it what a change!

Now, soothing as a low-breathed psalm,
Falls on the soul this holy calm;
With murmured music, faintly heard,
Of wind and wave and note of bird.
Then, darkly scowling frowned the sky,
As fierce winds whirled hoarse-screaming by;
The Grange stood windowless and bare,
A very image of despair;
And seemed, so bleakly desolate,
Fit emblem of its owners' fate—
All ties of kindred torn apart,
And anger festering in each heart:
I also tales—whence springing no one knows—
Hd turned fast friends to bitter foes;
And Law served only to entangle
In knots more intricate the wrangle:
For Law, like Physic, it is sure,
Makes worse the ills it cannot cure.
Thus stood these folk at daggers-drawn,
But darkest night gives way to dawn.

Two scions of the house became
Touched, kindled, by Love's sacred flame,
And, disregarding family hate,
In marriage bonds conjoined their fate;
Nor stopped they there; but, gently strong,
Srove ceaselessly to heal each wrong;
By witching wiles fierce feuds undoing,
Till hate, beneath their tender wooing,
Melted as ice in spring's warm ray,
And Woodleigh quarrels died away.
So, having made their dwelling-place
In the old mansion of their race,
This gentle couple gather there
All who relationship can share;
That Christmas may fresh healing bring,
With Love's renewal 'neath his wing.
And Woodleigh Grange, to this same end,
Smiles the warm welcome of a friend.

JOHN LATEY.

THE
ADMIRATION
OF THE
WORLD.

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WORLD'S HAIR RESTORER.

The admiration of the world for its wonderful life-giving properties to faded or falling hair, and quickly changing grey or white hair to its natural youthful colour and beauty. It is not a dye. It requires only a few applications to restore grey hair to its youthful colour and lustrous beauty, and induce luxuriant growth, and its occasional use is all that is needed to preserve it in its highest perfection and beauty. Dandruff is quickly and permanently removed. Sold by Chemists and Perfumers.

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has issued a valuable HANDBOOK (published by Messrs.
Chapman and Hall), which contains the following amongst other
lessons:—

PUDDINGS.

LESSON No. 15.—CORN FLOUR PUDDING.

Average cost of a "Corn Flour Pudding" (in a cup).

INGREDIENTS.	d.
2 dessert spoonsful of corn flour	1
1 pint of milk	1
6 lumps of sugar	01
1 egg	1
	3½

Time required, about an hour.

Now we will show you how to make a Corn Flour Pudding (in
a cup, for infants or invalids).

1. We put a saucepan half full of warm water on the fire to
boil.
2. We put two dessert spoonsful of corn flour into a saucepan.
3. We pour in by degrees half a pint of milk, mixing it very
smoothly. N.B.—We must be careful that it does not get lumpy.
4. We now add to it six lumps of sugar, put the saucepan on
the fire, and stir smoothly until it boils; it will take about ten
minutes.
5. We then move the saucepan to the side of the fire
6. We break one egg into the saucepan, and beat it up until it
is all well mixed.
7. We take a cup (just large enough to hold the pudding) and
grease it inside with a piece of butter.
8. We pour the mixture out of the saucepan into the cup
9. We take a small cloth, wring it out in boiling water, pour
it well, and tie it over the top of the cup with a piece of string.
N.B.—We should tie the four corners of the cloth over the
top of the cup.
10. When the water in the saucepan is quite boiling, we put it
in the cup and let it boil for twenty-five minutes.
11. For serving, we take the cloth off the cup, and the pudding
may be turned out or not, according to taste.

Now it is finished.

CAKES.

LESSON No. 6.—CORN FLOUR CAKE.

Average cost of a "Corn Flour Cake" (about three quarters
of a pound).

INGREDIENTS.	d.
1 lb. of corn flour	2
1 oz. of butter	2
2 lb. of loaf sugar	1
1 teaspoonful of baking powder	4
2 eggs	2
	7½

Time required, about hour.

Now we will show you how to make a Corn Flour Cake.

1. We put two ounces of butter into a basin, and beat it to a
cream.
2. We add to the butter a quarter of a pound of pounded loaf
sugar, and mix it well.
3. We break in two eggs and beat all well together.
4. We now stir lightly into the mixture a quarter of a pound
of corn flour and a teaspoonful of baking powder, and beat it well
together for five minutes.
5. We grease a cake-tin inside with butter or dripping.
6. We pour the mixture into the tin and put it immediately
into the oven (the heat should rise to 240 deg.) to bake for half
an hour.
7. After that time we turn the cake out of the tin and slant it
against a plate until it is cold. (This will prevent its getting
heavy.)
8. If preferred, the mixture could be baked in small tins
instead of one large one, in which case it would only take fifteen
minutes to bake.

Now it is finished.

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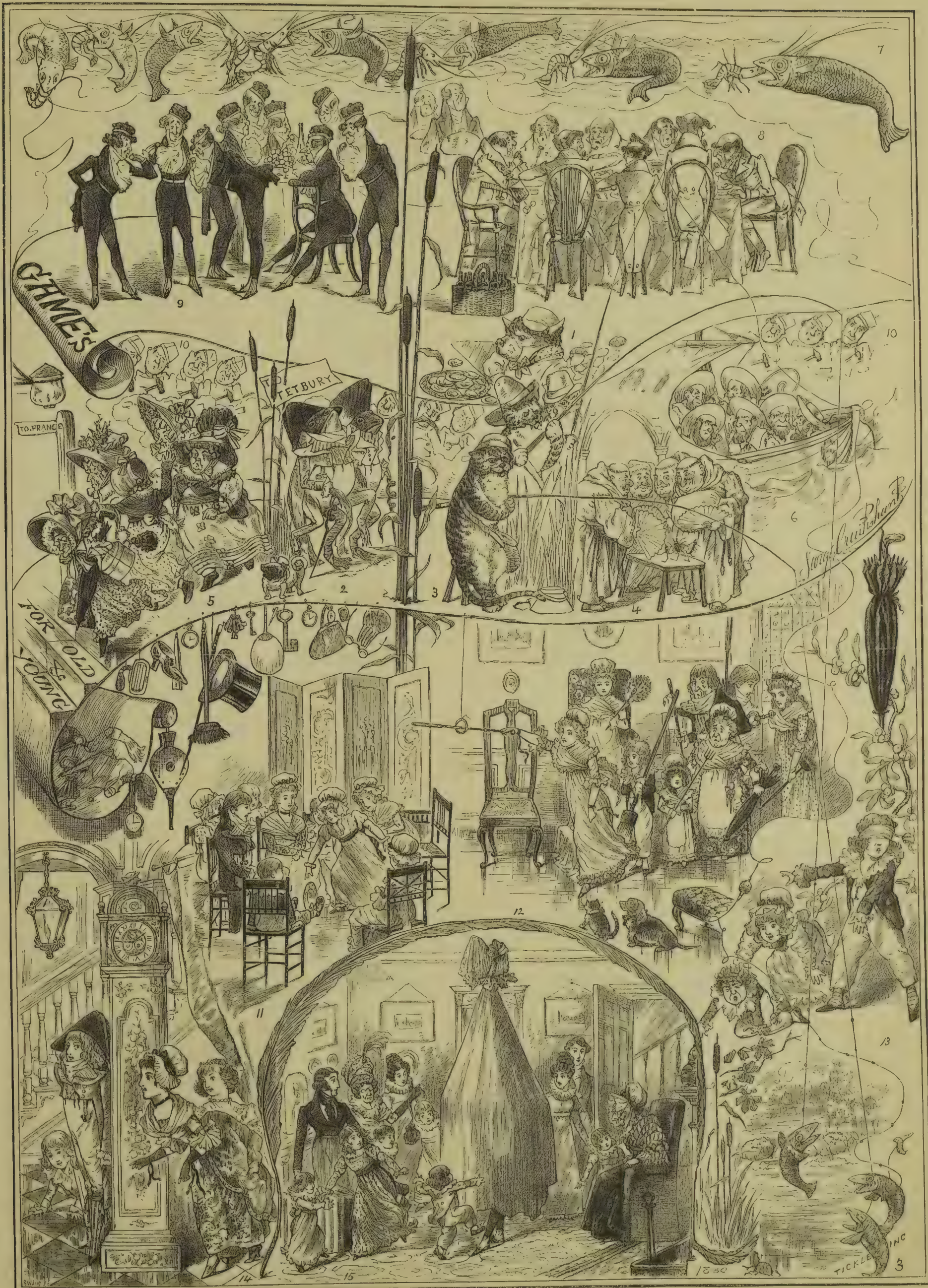


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HUBBUCK'S PAINTS, OILS, and
VARNISHES are the best and therefore the cheapest.
Beware of Counterfeits of their Name and Trade Mark.
Whitelead, Oil, Paint, and Varnish Works,
24, Lime-street, London.

FLORILINE.
For the TEETH and BREATH.

A few drops of the FRAGRANT FLORILINE on a wet tooth-
brush produce a delightful foam, which cleanses the Teeth from
all impurities, strengthens and hardens the gums, prevents tartar
and arrests the progress of decay. It gives to the Teeth a peculiar
and beautiful whiteness, and imparts a delightful fragrance to
the breath. It removes all unpleasant odour arising from decayed
teeth, a disordered stomach, or tobacco smoke. The FRAGRANT
FLORILINE is purely vegetable, and equally adapted to old and
young.

The FRAGRANT FLORILINE should be used in all cases
of bad breath, and particularly by gentlemen after smoking.
The Floriline combines, in a concentrated form, the most desirable,
cleansing, and astringent properties. At the same time, it con-
tains nothing which can possibly injure the most sensitive and
delicate organisation.

It beautifies the teeth and gums.
It arrests the decay of the teeth.
It acts as a detergent after smoking.
It renders the gums hard and healthy.
It neutralises the offensive secretions of the mouth.

It imparts to the breath a fragrance purely aromatic and
pleasant.

Put up in large bottles (only one size) and in elegant toilet-
cases complete, at 2s. 6d. Sold by all Chemists and Perfumers.

Sold Wholesale by THE ANGLO-AMERICAN DRUG COM-
PANY, Limited, 33, Farringdon-road, London.

FLORILINE.
For the TEETH and BREATH.

Sweet as the ambrosial air.
With its perfume rich and rare;
Sweet as violets at the morn,
Which the emerald nooks adorn;
Sweet as rosebuds bursting forth
From the richly-laden earth.
Is the "FRAGRANT FLORILINE."

The teeth it makes a pearly white,
So pure and lovely to the sight;
The gums assume a rosy hue,
The breath is sweet as violets blue;
While scented as the flowers of May,
Which cast their sweetness from each spray.
Is the "FRAGRANT FLORILINE."

Sure, some fairy with its hand
Cast around its mystic wand,
And produced from fairy's bow
Sweet as cherry, this taste is so pleasing that, instead
For in this liquid gem we trace—
All that can beauty add and grace—
Such is the "FRAGRANT FLORILINE."

Is the best liquid dentifrice in the world: it thoroughly
cleanses partially decayed teeth from all parasites or living
"animalcules," leaving them perfectly white, imparting a deli-
cious fragrance to the breath. Price 2s. 6d. per Bottle. The
Fragrant Floriline removes instantly all odours arising from a
foul stomach or tobacco-smoke.

For children and adults whose teeth show marks of decay its
advantages are paramount. The "Floriline" should be thor-
oughly brushed into all the cavities: no one needs fear using it
too often or too much at a time. Among the ingredients being
soda, honey, spirits of wine, borax, and extracts from sweet herbs
and plants, it forms not only the very best dentifrice for cleansing
over-discovered, but one that is perfectly delicious to the taste,
and as palatable as cherry. This taste is so pleasing that, instead
of taking up the toothbrush with dislike, as is often the case,
children will on no account omit to use the "Floriline" regu-
larly each morning if only left to their own choice. Children
cannot be taught the use of the toothbrush too young; early
brushing invariably produces premature decay of the teeth.
"Floriline" is sold by all Chemists and Perfumers throughout
the world, at 2s. 6d. per Bottle.

It makes the breath as sweet as flowers,
The teeth a pearly white;
The gums it hardens, and it gives
Sensations of delight.
All vile secretions it removes,
However long they've been;
The enamel, too, it will preserve.
The "FRAGRANT FLORILINE."

One trial proves conclusive quite,
That by its constant use
The very best effects arise
That science can produce.
It is the talk of every one,
An all-absorbing theme.
Whilst general use becomes the use
Of "FRAGRANT FLORILINE."

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SILKMERCEUR AND LINENDRAPER,
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CASH PRICES. PARCELS FREE.**SILK AND VELVETS.**Now on Sale. All patterns free.
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In all the new shades and mixture of OLD

GOLD, &c., for Promenade Wear. In Delicate 4s. 6d.

Tints, for Evening and Dinner Wear. In White, 7s. 6d.

Ivory, and Cream for Bridal Wear; also in Black. 6s. 6d.

RICH COLOURED VELVET BROCADES.

In splendid variety of New Shades and Mixture 5s. 11d.

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BLACK VELVET BROCADES.

In very handsome designs for

Dresses and Mantles, much

under price 7s. 6d. to 21s. 6d.

400 Piques Coloured Satin striped

Velvets, in every Shade 3s. 9d.

Italian Silk Velvets in every Shade 4s. 11d., 6s. 9d. to 8s. 9d.

Black Lyons Silk Velvet 9s. 6d. to 21s. 6d.

Coloured Lyons Silk Velvet, in all

New Shades 11s. 9d. to 16s. 9d.

PLUSHES AND SATINS.

The New Dress and Mantle Plush,

in Black and all New Colours 7s. 6d. to 10s. 9d.

Lyons Dress Silks, in every shade

of colour 2s. 11d., 3s. 6d. to 4s. 6d.

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Rich Duchesse Satin, in Black and

all the New Shades, 23 in the

wide 2s. 11d. to 3s. 6d.

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Patterns post-free.

WINTER DRESSES.

New Materials in New Colours,

Cashmere d'Italie, Grain de Poudre,

Cachemere de la Reine, Angola

Foule, &c. All pure wool, and

dyed by the most eminent Paris

dyers in Black and every new

colour. Prices, the Full Dress,

from 14s. 6d. to 25s. 6d.

Also, in Black and the same colours,

several thousand pieces of Cash-

mere and Cashmere Merinos, very

wide 2s. 2d. to 3s. 6d.

Estamene, Witney, Devonshire,

and other All-Wool Serges, in

Navy, Dark Brown, Prune,

Bronze, Black, &c. 1s. 6d. to 2s. 9d.

Cashmere Merino, and Cashmere

de Paris, in Rich Colourings, very

soft and fine, 44 to 47 inches

wide, per yard 2s. 6d. to 3s. 3d.

Also, Black 1s. 11d. to 5s. 6d.

Rich Velvet-Velveteens, Black,

White, and all the new colours

in Plain, Striped, and Embossed,

Also, the New Black, as advertised,

very wide 2s. 11d. to 5s. 6d.

The New Plush-Velveteen, in

Black and Colours, 27 in. wide,

4s. 9d.

EVENING DRESS MATERIALS.

In Plain and Damask Grenadines 1s. to 2s. 6d.

Tinsel Gauze in great Variety 6d. to 1s. 9d.

Rich Japanese Silk in Plain and Damask, at one

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The New Grès Grain Japanese, 22 inches wide .. 2s. 9d.

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MODERATE PRICES.

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WAKENPHAST and CO.'S

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BOOTS and SHOES

FOR LADIES,

at Moderate Prices for

READY MONEY ONLY.

LADIES' BOOTS and SHOES for**"WINTER and ROUGH WEATHER,"**

Own Manufacture guaranteed by Trade Mark stamped on

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Choose your fit, and your Number will be registered for

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N.B. LADIES' FANCY EVENING and HOUSE SHOES
CHEAPER THAN ANY OTHER HOUSE IN LONDON.

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Ladies and Gentlemen visiting the British metropolis

to inspect a variety of

ELEGANT COSTUMES,**PARISIAN and BERLIN MANTLES,****ARTISTIC MILLINERY,****HATS,**

AND

EVERY VARIETY IN DRESS,

SPECIALLY SELECTED IN PARIS, AND

REPRESENTING

THE CORRECT FASHIONS OF THE
SEASON.THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT FROM AN AMERICAN
PAPER IS A PLEASING TESTIMONY TO THE SYSTEM
OF BUSINESS ADOPTED AT THIS HOUSE:—"WE VISITED DURING OUR SOJOURN IN LONDON
LAST YEAR THE WAREHOUSE OF MESSRS. JAY, THE
MOST NOTED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KIND IN THE
WORLD. IN LOOKING THROUGH ITS NUMEROUS
DEPARTMENTS WE WERE ABLE TO APPRECIATE THE
TRUE CAUSE OF THE DISTINGUISHED SUCCESS
WHICH HAS ATTENDED THE ESTABLISHMENT FOR
MANY YEARS."MESSRS. JAY RECEIVE LARGE SUPPLIES OF COS-
TUMES AND MILLINERY DIRECT FROM THE FIRST
HOUSES IN PARIS, AND THEY ARE SOLD AT MUCH
MORE MODERATE PRICES THAN LADIES CAN PROCURE
THEM ON THE CONTINENT. WE TAKE PLEASURE IN
DIRECTING THE ATTENTION OF OUR FAIR READERS
TO THIS TIME-HONOURED ESTABLISHMENT, WHERE
WE ARE SURE THEY WILL BE HONESTLY AND
LOYALLY DEALT WITH."**JAY'S,****THE LONDON GENERAL****MOURNING WAREHOUSE,****REGENCY-STREET, W.**

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Gentlemen can depend on the very best materials, at a fair

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effective restorer extant. One trial will convince it has no

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AUREOLINE produces the beautiful Golden Colour so

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of the following are now ready, and will be sent, post-
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1s. 11d., 2s. 9d., and 3s. 3d.
Velour Cloths, 27 in. wide, 10s. 6d., and 1s. 11d.
PATTERNS FREE. Melton Cloths, 27 in. wide, 2s. 2d.
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Inexpensive Materials, 4yd. to 8yd.**PATTERNS OF MOURNING MATERIALS AND BLACK**
GOODS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION POST-FREE.**BLACK and COLOURED****VELVET-VELVETEEN,****FAST PILE AND COLOUR,**

almost equal in appearance to Lyons Velvet, 1s. 11d. to 5s. 11d.

PARIS EMBROIDERY.Most exquisite specimens of PARIS NEEDLEWORK, at 2s. 6d.,
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All the best LYONS MANUFACTURE, at 1s. 11d.
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ILLUSTRATIONS OF NEWEST COSTUMES and MANTLES,
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GOLD CRYSTAL-CASE, HALF-CHRONOMETER,

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GOLD CRYSTAL-CASE 1-PLATE KEYLESS LEVER**WATCH, with Compensation Balance, &c., from .. 31 10 0****GOLD CRYSTAL-CASE LEVER WATCH, with Com-****penetration Balance, from .. 18 18 0****GOLD CRYSTAL-CASE LEVER WATCH, from .. 15 15 0****GOLD LEVER WATCHES for LADIES .. 12 12 0****SILVER CRYSTAL-CASE 1-PLATE KEYLESS****LEVER WATCH, with Compensation Balance .. 25 0 0****SILVER CRYSTAL-CASE LEVER WATCHES, with****Compensation Balances, from .. 9 9 0****SILVER CRYSTAL-CASE LEVER WATCHES, from 6 6 0****LADIES' GOLD WATCHES, from .. 6 6 0****YOUTHS' SILVER WATCHES .. 3 3 0****CHRISTMAS CARDS EXTRAORDINARY.**

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J. TANN'S RELIANCE SAFES

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FIRE-RESISTING SAFES, £5 5s.

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is free from disagreeable taste and smell, and causes no

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DINNEFORD'S FLUID MAGNESIA.

The best remedy for Acidity of the Stomach,

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instantly relieve and rapidly cure Asthma, Consumption,

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in the Chest, Rheumatism; and taste pleasantly. Sold at 1s. 11d.

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COMIC OPERA.
Performed at the Strand Theatre with enormous success.
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You *cruel* dear! how *can* you treat me so?
 When we left school you promised me, you know,
 As clasped in tight embrace we sobbed farewell,
 That all your daily doings you would tell;
 And now almost a week has passed away
 Since last you wrote. Have you, then, naught to say?
 Nothing of *that young officer* to tell,
 Who danced so often with you, and so well?
 Ah, dearest Bella! how I envied you,
 As round, with him, on music's wings you flew!
 A *real ball*!—unlike our school-day dances
 Where girl to girl now sets and now advances,
 So primly staid, so orderly, and slow,
 Mid cries of "Shoulders down!" and "Point the toe!"
 A *real ball* is, as you say, *divine*;
 And now, dear Bella, you shall hear of mine.
 For *we* have had a ball, and—can you guess?—
 Another still, with *all in fancy dress*!
 Let me begin at the beginning. Well,
 The *first* was planned by dear Aunt Isabel—
 Your namesake, love! and—next, of course, to *you*—
 The dearest darling that I ever knew!
 Crowds were invited—all our many cousins,
 With neighbours' children, reckoned by the dozens;
 And, as their steps some little ones I taught,
 A friend my likeness capitally caught:
 One tiny tot kept footing it about,
 Until her skipping fairly tired me out.
 The dance went off *delightfully*, and *all*
 Enjoyed themselves immensely—great and small.
We grown-up ones, I'm sure, were quite as gay
 As were the romping children in their play.
 But how shall I describe each circumstance
 Of our *delicious* fancy-costume dance?
 I'm sure no Lord Mayor's ball of young folk ever
 Surpassed our ball in motley groups—*no, never*!
 Laplanders, Spaniards, Indians, Japanese,
 And other folk, whose names you cough and sneeze!

FERNANDE.

BY M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.

CHAPTER I.

Bright, indeed, was the picture that met Fernande's sad eyes as she strolled along the quays of the fine old French city on the banks of the Loire that winter day. On one side the river, bristling with ships from all nations, flowed clear and swift towards the sea; on the other, were handsome shops, their glittering wares already displayed to best advantage on account of the coming holiday; with gay equipages flashing by in the mild winter sunshine, and far beyond the noble city and towering cathedral, the green river banks crowned by many a nestled chateau and modest spire. Of all French towns this ancient capital of Brittany is surely the most ingratiating and the most cheerful, alike in winter and summer.

Fernande, in spite of her heaviness of heart, felt the exhilaration of the scene, and, glad of any escape from her own thoughts, paused to look at everything. The heavily-freighted little steamers plying between the city and neighbouring villages, the foreign flags waving from the lofty masts of merchant-vessels, the bustle of the quays, the gay shop-windows, all attracted her attention, though they were sightless to her. On every day. By-and-by, she sat down and watched a train come in; for between quay and boulevard, right through the heart of the town, runs the railway, adding still more to the animation of the picture.

It was a train from Paris, and as it glided slowly towards the station a curious and unexpected circumstance happened. Just opposite to the bench on which sat Fernande there appeared from one of the carriage windows, a woman's hand—an exquisite, ungloved hand—from which fell, flying before the wind in all directions, little slips of printed paper. The lady herself remained invisible, evidently wishing not to be seen, though as long as the train continued on the quay the lovely little bare hand could be descried, and the tiny missives that fluttered from it, to the infinite diversion of the spectators.

Fernande rose eagerly to possess herself of one of the papers, but, in the act of stretching out her arms, it seemed like a butterfly to fly towards her, settling on her breast. She smiled, saying to herself that this should be a good omen, and with eager eyes read the following:—

"Madame Lorenzi, formerly of the Théâtre Français, will to-morrow evening give recitations from the dramatists, with a selection from living Breton poets."

Sorrow in some natures is a sharpener of the faculties; and as Fernande sat conning these words, they seemed to suggest something of a hopeful nature to her. Like most of us in youth, she felt impatient of sorrow, and, having a large capacity for happiness, she felt ready to make any effort on her own behalf and that of the one being she loved best in the world, her husband.

So she mused and mused, and, when she had made out a plan, rose and hastened away; no longer with slow, dragging steps, but with an elastic tread betokening cheerfulness. Nothing could be more modest than the little rooms in an old-fashioned quarter of the town constituting Fernande's home. Yet there were evidences of the happier auspices under which the young bride had entered on them two years ago. The cold hearth looked dreary enough now. The larder, Fernande knew, was nearly empty. But there were well-filled book-cases, a little piano, pictures on the walls, warm rugs covering the floor. The direst need only would compel the young husband and wife to part with these. It was yet early in the afternoon, and a more prudent person than Fernande would have taken time for further thought before putting her design into execution. She would not, she could not wait a minute. Having sat with folded hands brooding over her troubles for weeks past, she now felt an impulse to hope and to act far too ardent to be checked. To-morrow, might not alike cheerfulness and enterprise fail her?

Unlocking a drawer of her husband's writing-table, she now very carefully drew forth a manuscript, bearing, alas! unmistakable signs of having been sent forth into the cold world to seek its fortunes again and again, in vain. Certain courteous little editorial pencillings here and there, certain slight evidences of wear and tear in the post office, told its story but too well. Genius there might be here, but it was not of a kind that as yet had touched the heart or inspired the mind of the critic.

Fernande smiled, however, as she gazed on the familiar page. There was but one poet in the world for her, at least one poet whose career formed a part of her existence, and she believed in the beauty of the poem before her now, as she had done in the first days of her marriage, when the reading of it and the hopes inspired by it had formed a new and sweeter link between the husband and wife.

"Ah! I shall do all that I always hoped to do now that I have you to inspire and encourage me," he had said, and she believed him, nursing all kinds of bright hopes, one by one to be dispelled.

To-day, however, no tears fell on the faded page. No sighs were breathed over those pencillings, so harmless in appearance, yet so fatal in reality. She caught the manuscript to her heart with a smile of rapture instead, and, hiding it under her shabby little shawl, again went out into the gay streets, this time not seeking the boulevard by the river, but the handsome squares in the heart of the city where stood the principal hotels.

Stopping at the entrance of the first of these, she asked with that confidence ever inspired by desperate circumstances, "Madame Lorenzi, is she staying here? Can I speak to her, if you please?"

"Yes, Madame is here; permit me to take up your card," said the waiter, not, perhaps, without some suspicion of Fernande's errand. We tell our stories to the world so much oftener than we suppose! Then, taking the card from his ill-gloved hands, he tripped lightly up the handsome staircase, leaving her in suspense below.

A few minutes later Fernande was herself ascending those wide, handsomely-carpeted stairs. After knocking two or three times (why is it that the first knock of the suppliant is seldom heard?) a rich, deep, but muffled voice bade her enter.

On opening the door, still too anxious and too concentrated on one fixed purpose to feel timid, Fernande found herself in the presence of the great artist from Paris, the famous tragedian, the reciter of verse, who was said to have made the fortune and renown of more than one young poet of the day by the mere recital of a few stanzas.

An organ so sonorous, so full and varied in tone as that of the famous Madame Lorenzi could not belong to a person of mean appearance, and Fernande had come prepared to admire some one quite unlike any woman of her acquaintance. Nor was she disappointed. This magnificent creature was so large, so imposing, so majestic, that the poor child began to feel a crushing sense of her own inferiority by comparison, also an almost paganish veneration, as if she must go down on her knees and kiss those exquisite white hands in token of the humblest worship.

But at that moment no kind of salutation was possible, and

had Fernande been in any other mood she would have smiled at the uniqueness of the great lady's reception. Truth to tell, in her extreme good humour, the tragedian had admitted the humble visitor whilst engaged in the act of arranging her hair, at the moment of Fernande's entrance, her face, arms, and shoulders being clouded over by wondrously beautiful, curly black locks. Such hair we witness seldom more than once in a life-time; and the dark, lustrous, rippling, waving masses that reached to the knees seemed as if they must be burdensome to the possessor. Some minutes, indeed, elapsed ere the delicate fingers, holding an ivory handled brush, succeeded in dividing the black cloud straight over the brow. Then the lady rested from her labours, and, turning a massive face, beaming with good humour and almost childlike naïveté, towards the intruder, inquired her errand without a word.

Thus encouraged, Fernande moved a step forward and laid her manuscript on the table.

"Ah!" said the tragedian, smiling, "You too are a would-be poet, and covetous of fame. Poor child! Leave such dissillusions to men. Women have enough of another kind."

It requires little perspicacity in France to discern the woman who works and who struggles. The black dress is the livery of labour as of sorrow among the middle classes, and Fernande's face, with its eager look and sensitive lines, might well have belonged to struggling genius. A prouder flush than that of self-esteem, however, mounted to her cheeks as she made answer.

"It is not of myself I am come to speak, Madame, but of my husband. There is something in his poetry, I am sure; but he has never yet succeeded with the publishers. And a year ago he lost his professorship at the Lycée because he took part in a political demonstration, and since then he has been able to obtain no employment whatever. Such misfortunes embitter him—we are very unhappy."

"And you want me to read his verses and so bring the critics to his feet?" said the lady, archly, yet with evident disconcertment. "Ah! now that you have come to plead for your husband, I know how hard it will be to send you away. But, my child, you must remember the poet is one person, the critics are Legion, and, if all the world reject him, he must accept the verdict."

The manuscript lying on the table had already told its story to those experienced eyes but too well.

"Oh!" Fernande urged, almost choking with eagerness, "It is as you say. But do, please, glance at the poem. It is a legend of this town. It is full of noble sentiments; and there are descriptions which would please people who know the place."

"You are a capital advocate," rejoined the tragedian, kindly, yet a little carelessly; she was so accustomed to such appeals. "And I will, at least, promise you one thing. I will run through the manuscript; and if, indeed, my judgment goes with my sympathies, your dearest wishes shall be fulfilled."

She smiled on the eager young face, already lined with care, and could not resist adding, "If, as you say, the poem has a strong local interest, who knows but that I may, indeed, be the means of making its author's reputation."

"Oh! you are kinder than the angels," Fernande said, bending down to kiss the beautiful white hand, still holding the ivory-handled brush. "I shall have happy dreams to-night."

The lady leaned forward, and taking two little blue cards from a silk bag on the table pushed them towards her.

"Anyhow, you shall have the gratification of hearing me. Accept these tickets for the recital; and now leave me to finish my toilet, for I am expecting many visitors."

Fernande poured out her thanks as best she could, then, casting a last fond look at the manuscript, hurried away, hardly knowing whether to hope in the realisation of her dreams or no. Unversed in the ways of the world, she knew not how far she might rely on such readiness to oblige, or how much she must fear the critic. She reproached herself for not having tried to produce a deeper impression, so hard is it for us to feel that we have done enough, when our efforts are made on behalf of another!

CHAPTER II.

Fernande determined to keep her own counsel, and the subject of the coming recital was not even mooted till next day. As the pair sat over their silent breakfast—odd it is how sorrow silences, how joy makes garrulous!—she looked up at the dark-browed face opposite to her own, and said,

"Etienne, you will go with me to hear Madame Lorenzi to-night? I have had tickets given me."

Without raising his eyes from his plate, the young professor replied—that one short speech giving a clue to the character of the man,

"Yes; we must have gone had no tickets been sent. All the professors and scholars of the Lycée are to be there, I hear. If I stayed away, people would say, either that I was ashamed of myself, or that we had not two francs in the world for the purchase of the tickets." He laughed with excessive cynicism. "It is a pleasant world," he added. "Suppose we make up our minds to bid adieu to it altogether."

"Oh! do not be so bitter—so reckless," the young wife said, imploringly. "Heaven has not forsaken us, I am sure. We shall yet see better days."

By way of reply he merely shrugged his shoulders. Fernande, watching him, mused sadly on the transforming power of care. Sarcastic her husband had ever been, and very proud; but no one kinder, more genial, so long as he had been prosperous.

It pained her, too, inexpressibly, that her own affection hardly seemed to console him now. Whilst the slightest sign of his love for her could have lightened the darkest hour, he appeared to shrink back into himself, and to regard even love as a mockery in being so forlorn and unhappy.

Never had a larger or more varied audience been gathered together in the spacious theatre than that assembled to-night to welcome the great artist. It was an occasion of enjoyment alike for the grave as well as the frivolous-minded, the young as well as the old, the cultured as well as the uneducated. What French-born man, woman, or child but can enjoy a scene from Racine, a song of Béranger, an idyll of Lamartine, a fable of La Fontaine, when delivered with the power, sweetness, and pathos of a Lorenzi? Such things are familiar to all, and thrill a French audience with generous enthusiasm. No sooner, therefore, had this magnificent creature begun the rehearsal with Victor Hugo's superb "Cain" than the whole vast audience was attuned for the rest; and—so subtle is the power of elocution!—that rich, musical, many-toned voice soon lifted even the sad heart of Fernande into airier regions. As she listened with bated breath to the passionate utterances of Athalie she forgot the hopes that had buoyed her up throughout the day; she heard, not in suspense, but in a frame of mind with which personal feeling had nothing to do, this great, living world of poetry and eloquence absorbing her own troubled world, so poor, so puny, at best!

And Etienne soon forgot his crushed ambitions, his deep-

seated bitterness, as he glowed under those rapid impressions. Fernande, glancing at his eager face, and suddenly recalled to her fond, foolish hopes, as, indeed, they already seemed, consoled herself with the thought that, anyhow, they would return home the richer for such an experience. Madame Lorenzi would bring them neither fame nor fortune, but she would bestow a beautiful memory none could take away.

For all Fernande's soaring hopes vanished under the excitement of this incomparable evening. As one magnificent poem after another was delivered, now with the tenderest grace, now with the finest passion, every phrase and word even gaining greater beauty and deeper meaning, she felt herself growing happier and humbler. No; it was mere self-deception and audacity to hope that her husband could as yet be enrolled among the goodly company of the poets. He must make greater effort, he must abide his time.

Thus the enchanted moments glided by, and, at last, when the tragedian did indeed announce a selection from living Breton poets, Fernande waited, cold and listless. She hoped no more in the realisation of her project, and she would fain have had the evening over, since nothing now awaited her but disillusion. Her disappointment she had no right to call it. They must wake up to-morrow to the work-a-day world as if nothing had happened, and must brace themselves to endure what further trial Heaven should see fit to inflict. It was not at all in the nature of things that evil fortunes should be changed in a day! The clouds must break by degrees, and the sun would doubtless shine out in time, but not now and not suddenly, as by magic.

So she sat with cold eyes and folded hands, no longer deceiving herself, only amazed at the wild ambitions of an hour or two ago.

Was she dreaming? Did she really hear, or was it but in imagination, her husband's name? She leaned forward now desperately eager, she watched the tragedian as if her very existence depended on the next words she should utter, and when they came, when in unmistakably clear and emphatic tones her husband's name was again pronounced, it was with the greatest difficulty she could maintain self-composure. She dared not even so much as glance at the rigid figure by her side, but the short sigh, the quickly drawn-in breath, denoted an agitation stronger than her own. There are moments in life when, in truth, "la joie fait peur," and this was one.

The young professor had turned ashen pale on realising the truth. For, of course, his poor despised verses were not now dragged forth for criticism and cold, chilling analysis, but for praise and warm applause only. He, in his turn, was to make this enthusiastic audience thrill with poetic fervour, and to appear before his fellow-townsmen, in the ineffable light of the teacher, the poet! Such a triumph might well have girdoned one doubly gifted and doubly unhappy. With the swift unerring discernment of the true critic, the artiste had culled from the somewhat ponderous manuscript just the one piece of descriptions suited to the audience and the occasion. It was a charming little piece of word-painting, in which the features of this fine old French city on a summer moonlight night were faithfully yet poetically delineated by one who knew them well—the sombre cathedral, the bastioned chateau, the broad flowing Loire, the crowded harbour, the wooded islets. Such a picture could but touch listeners familiarised with it from early childhood; whilst running through the whole passage was a vein of deep, almost passionate sadness and ardent patriotism. The verses, moreover, told a story, a story of aspiration, of disappointment, of a life unsatisfied with common things. And as a specimen of a young poet feeling his wings, it might well have received the suffrages of a much more critical audience, especially when rendered in accents so faultless, with elocution so exquisite! The audience, no less generous in France than elsewhere on such occasions, readily seized on the opportunity of praising an unfortunate man. Almost every one present knew the young professor's story, one reason the more for extraordinary applause and cries, "The author! the author!"

There was no drawing back. Pale, trembling in every limb, looking more like a culprit at the bar than a hero in the moment of his triumph, Etienne now rose, and, trying to smile, bowed to the right and to the left.

Never had the pair lived through so intense a moment, and when it was over, unable any longer to endure such unwonted strain, they quietly rose, and, quitting the theatre, hurried home in silence and happy tears!

CHAPTER III.

"Oh!" were Etienne's first words on entering the house. "What a galling thing is such poverty as ours! To-morrow, when I go to throw myself at the feet of my benefactress, I shall be the only one of her poets present unable to offer a flower!"

"She will want no thanks," Fernande said, recalling the careless good-nature with which she had been received, "nor flowers either"—she was about to say, unthinkingly—her table was covered with them; checking herself in time, she added instead—"But though we can do nothing for her, who knows what she may not be able to do for us?" "Who knows, indeed!" Etienne cried. "She may introduce me to the publishers of Paris, and I may at once obtain some literary employment. Anyhow, what has happened to-night can but have good effect. I am no longer a poor creature in the eyes of my townfolk!"

"How the people clapped! Ah! I am too happy!" Fernande said, as indeed she was. Tears of joy again came to her relief, and when she retired to rest, it was to dream, but not to sleep. Nor did sleep visit Etienne's eyes that night, though what a difference between the thoughts of husband and wife as each tossed on a restless pillow!

Fernande saw in this blissful occurrence a prospect of bettered worldly condition, of immediate fortune, of burdensome debts paid, of a well-stored larder, of certain domestic comforts so long denied them. The recognition of her husband's poetic faculty afforded a deeper satisfaction than any such thoughts as these, but she was a housewife, and her housewifery instincts had been sorely tried by the poverty of the last twelve months. She could not help dwelling most on the material results of this piece of unexpected good fortune. Imagination even soared so far as to picture a pet canary in the parlour window, a stand of flowers, a pair of new curtains to replace the faded red moreen that had been such an eyesore for months past.

Etienne, on the other hand, indulged in equally extravagant dreams of a different kind. The publishing world of Paris would find him out. The prestige accorded to his poem by Madame Lorenzi's reading, would lead to fame and fortune; perhaps in time to a high position in the Parisian world of letters. He should make the acquaintance of those congenial to him; he should be able to buy books, to travel a little, and, above all, he should write something that would win him universal recognition.

Thus feverishly the night passed to both; and when morning broke Etienne could hardly wait till the proper hour came for paying his respects to the great lady. Fernande watched him set off with a face from which care had almost fled, so

wonderfully rapid is the healing of joy! Her husband had kissed her fondly at parting, had been his old self over their frugal breakfast. Yes, there was no doubt of it, their long probation had come to an end; better days were in store for them.

Little more than an hour passed when the young professor returned, lightfooted, as if treading on air. Never had she seen him so animated, so gay. From his face, too, had vanished, as if by magic, the lines of care.

"Think of it," he cried, eagerly. "Madame Lorenzi gives a dinner to-night at her hotel, to which all the literary men of the place are invited, I amongst them! Oh! the nobility of that woman! She will prove our good star, Fernande."

"I have never been to a dinner party in my life," Fernande said, simply. "It will be more of an event to me than to anyone."

"My dear child," Etienne replied, with just a touch of implied reproach, "ladies are not invited, you no more than the rest. Madame Lorenzi's banquet is given to the poets, from whose works she read last night, and after the dinner she will play the critic to each."

Fernande was silent. She saw the reasonableness of her exclusion, but felt disconcerted by it nevertheless. For a few moments only, however. She was too happy just then to dwell on anything in the shape of a mere personal disappointment. And, after all, she reasoned to herself, it is he who is the poet, not I. From what motive but benevolence should I be invited to such a reunion? So she saw Etienne again set off with the same unclouded face, and, when at a late hour he had not returned, went to bed full of blissful dreams. Madame Lorenzi's marked favour must indicate a wish to serve them. She soon fell into the deep unbroken sleep of youth and hope.

Next morning came another piece of hopeful intelligence, followed also, alas! by a check. "Madame Lorenzi is determined to be my friend," were Etienne's first words. "To-day I am to breakfast with her, *tête-à-tête*, to talk over my prospects, and in the afternoon she is going to present me to the president of the Academy of Arts—a man who, if he liked, could give me a post to-morrow. And, think of it, Fernande! one bookseller here, Pierre, on the Quays, has already made advances to me about my poem. But I will publish in Paris, or nowhere. A provincial debut stamps a book with inferiority at once."

"Tell me all about the banquet," Fernande said, trying not to show the embarrassment she could but feel at the notion of that *tête-à-tête* breakfast. "Was the conversation witty? Did Madame Lorenzi talk magnificently?"

"Ah! Fernande, there is no woman like her," cried the young professor, carried away by a really grateful enthusiasm. "To listen to her is to be inspired as by the sound of trumpets. No; she did not talk magnificently. She recited to us instead; first from the works of one, then from another. I was not left out. We were all weeping and smiling by turns at our own compositions."

"That must have been droll," Fernande said, laughing merrily.

"I must tell you the rest another time," he added, producing his pocket-book. "I have a dozen commissions to perform for Madame Lorenzi. She has set us all to work—André, my old schoolfellow, whose poem was published a year ago; Bertrand, who is assistant editor of the Republican paper here; and Roget, the great littérateur from Paris, who only condescends to visit his old friends and his native place from time to time. We are all, of course, only too proud and happy to be of use to her; and I think she could employ a dozen more. You see, she is making the tour of the provinces, and everything has to be arranged."

"I hope, indeed, some good may come of it all to ourselves," poor Fernande said, beginning to feel doubtful, and obliged to feel egotistical.

"Is not good already come of it?" Etienne retorted. "It is a mine of wealth to a young author even to be recognised by such a critic. But, now, I must not linger another moment."

He hastened away, leaving Fernande to a long, long day of solitude and hopes; not, however, unalloyed as those of the day before had been.

CHAPTER IV.

Fernande's jealous thoughts might have been allayed had she known that the tragedian numbered as many volunteers in her service of one sex as of the other. Ever ready to lavish bounties, she was equally ready to receive, and her arrival in any place was the signal for an outburst of enthusiastic rivalry among her admirers. She could not bestow favours on all, but she could receive them; in other words, find everyone something to do, and the humblest behest was accepted as a privilege. Thus the great lady needed neither hired secretary, errand boy, nor even maid. A dozen literary aspirants were ready to undertake the first-named duties, whilst obscure adorers of her own sex offered their services in the capacity of waiting women. Never, indeed, was a queen of tragedy more royally served, and never at so little cost. A smile, a pretty speech, a hand clasp, seemed more than reward enough; though Madame Lorenzi was often enabled to confer more substantial benefits. What famous personage is not? Fernande remained wholly outside the animated, excited circle of which Madame Lorenzi formed the central figure. The tragedian had expressed no wish to make her acquaintance. Heaven help her! she had a dozen wistful-eyed poets' wives on her hands already. To poor Fernande, therefore, the only result of Etienne's triumph so far was a daily increasing solitude for herself.

"More commissions! more invitations?" she asked on the fourth morning when Etienne descended as usual, dressed with great care, and evidently about to spend the day after the usual manner.

"My dear Fernande," he replied, in a hurt tone, "you surely do not grudge any amount of time I bestow on that lady!"

"Oh, no; but has anything more been done about the poem?" she asked, anxious that the main point should be kept in view, "and is there any chance of employment for you?"

"Yes, there is a chance."

He looked at her penetratingly, and added, with evident reluctance, "I ought to go to Paris for a short time. That is my best chance. Would you object?"

Tears started to Fernande's eyes, for she took in the full meaning of the words at once. He could bear nay, could even entertain the notion of going to Paris and leaving her behind alone.

"We must talk it over this evening," he said, hastily. "You will see how many things are in my favour if I could make use of Madame Lorenzi's introductions at once. And she will be returning to Paris, too. On account of the wintry weather, she feels inclined to give up her provincial tour. She is ready to further my wishes to the utmost of her power."

Fernande listened and let him go without a word. Nor when he returned to the subject that same evening had she a word to say on her own behalf either. It seemed, indeed, as if all argument that did not come straight from his own heart would be useless. So she listened sadly and wonderingly, asking herself of what nature might this fascination be which so blinded her husband to his duty?

And the lady herself? Could that grand creature, with her almost infantine good-nature and winning smiles, have any notion of the harm she was doing? Etienne had been ever inclined to bitterness and discontent, but hitherto only the clouds of poverty had darkened their married life. Both portionless, both obscure, they had chosen each other from personal liking, and hitherto only needed a modest share of well-being to be quite happy. Oh! it was hard, thought Fernande, that the trap she had laid for good fortune should have proved a snare for evil hap! When timidly confronting the great lady with her husband's manuscript under her shawl, how little had she foreseen any such possibility—a growing distrust on her side, a growing estrangement on his; no chance, so it seemed, at least, in these first moments of dismay, of things ever being quite smooth between them again!

And when next morning broke—the last of the old year—and Etienne, as usual, prepared for a long day's campaign in Madame Lorenzi's service, Fernande could no longer keep back her jealous thoughts. Pale, hollow-eyed, from tears and sleeplessness, she said, as she poured out his early cup of coffee,

"To-morrow is the first day of the year, Etienne. You will at least keep that for me, will you not? We have no money for presents, but we will pay visits, as usual."

Etienne swallowed his coffee and replied, feigning not to see her wistful looks, not to hear the tremulous misgiving in her voice.

"Let us settle our affairs first, and pay our New-Year's visits afterwards, my child. You are ambitious for me, Fernande, you wish me to make my way as an author; you cannot really object to this proposed journey to Paris. What if I am a few weeks away, so long as I bring back Fortunatus's purse in my pocket?"

This little speech, however well intentioned, had an inexpressibly harsh sound in Fernande's ears. A moment before she had been ready to throw herself on his breast and there weep out all her fears and apprehensions. Now she felt hopelessly silenced and chilled. A something, she knew not what, in his voice, a touch of lightness, approaching to flippancy, seemed to separate her farther from him than ever. And when, after a cold kiss and a hasty word of adieu, he went away, it was a positive relief to her to be alone. Yet, as the hours wore on, the loneliness grew more and more insupportable. She had no heart for housewifely duties, she could not occupy herself with the little purse she had been knitting for Etienne's New-Year's gift—what a mockery would be such a gift now!—so at last she put on her bonnet and shawl and went out.

There had been a storm of rain and sleet; but the sun now shone brightly, and the streets presented the gayest appearance. Everyone was abroad, for the purpose of seeing the New-Year's displays in the shop-windows and making purchases for the morrow. Fernande felt more than ever forlorn as she at last reached the busy quays and sat down in the planted walk between the streets, the railway, and the river.

As she sat thus on the very bench she had occupied a few days before, when that fateful missive had fluttered towards her, a carriage drove by in which sat Madame Lorenzi and her husband. Now, there was nothing at all extraordinary in such an occurrence. The great lady, having no lacquey, never drove out without some devoted servant of either sex to fulfil her behests. It was not in accordance with the fitness of things that she should trail her velvet skirts through the mud for the purpose of buying a newspaper or a box of bonbons. Some one must rid her of such trouble, and thrice proud and happy was the privileged person.

To-day it had fallen to Etienne's turn, and no wonder that his face glowed with pleasure as he listened to his companion's sparkling talk. Was it to be wondered at also that, for the time being, he should forget Fernande's anxious looks and all the grinding care he had left at home?

But the unhappy young wife interpreted his animation to mean much more than the fascination of an hour, the distraction of a day.

With a set face and a heart from which hope had died away, Fernande rose, but not to take the road leading home. Drawing down her veil, she walked rapidly in a wholly different direction.

CHAPTER V.

That night a solemn ceremonial linked with genial social observances took place in every church throughout the town—indeed, throughout the country. It was the so-called *veille* or midnight mass commemorative of the last day of the year, which in France is ever followed by friendly little collations, simple or costly according to the circumstances of the host. Since their marriage Etienne and Fernande had always brought home half a dozen friends from church, and spread a modest little banquet in their honour. But this year even such an indulgence could not be thought of, and, as they had received no invitations either, Fernande resigned herself to the enjoyment of the music alone. On these occasions the finest compositions of the great masters are given with orchestral and voice accompaniments; and the chapels attached to the conventual institutions especially vie with each other in the musical treat offered their congregations.

There was one in particular to which lovers of music resorted, sure there of listening to well-trained voices and faultless orchestration. This was the Chapel of the Visitation, an order recruited from ladies of noble family, who take perpetual vows and devote themselves ever after to prayer and meditation. Their black-robed statuesque figures are seen behind an iron screen of the chapel, and weird is the effect on any jubilee like the present, when the rest of the building is brilliantly lighted, adorned with flowers, garlands, and banners, and crowded with holiday-makers in gala dresses.

Long before midnight every part of the elegant little building was densely thronged. An unusually disagreeable night had been braved for the sake of the most imposing celebration of the year. And it must be admitted the after sociabilities, the anticipated chat, the champagne, had enticed out not a few. There were two present, however, in whose troubled minds, hardly religious fervour, much less intellectual or worldly enjoyment, could enter just then. After a long, animated day, spent in the tragedian's company, and also in unsparing devotion to her service, Etienne had been thus dismissed. "It is New-Year's Eve," the great lady said, kindly but carelessly. "Your wife will need your escort to mass, and I am engaged out to dinner and a Veillée. To-morrow, why should you not bring her to see me? We can then enter more fully into your plans?"

Etienne stammered forth unready thanks, foreseeing too well that such favours had come too late.

He hurried home, however, in a cheerful frame of mind, determined to argue the matter of his projected visit to Paris more at length with her, and, if possible, reason her out of these jealous fears. If, indeed, just now she could no longer find in her husband the Etienne of old, still less could he feel as if this were the Fernande he once knew, a Fernande who had once been ever fond, ever confiding, ever trustful.

What was his surprise to find their little rooms dark, cold, and deserted, and Fernande's bonnet and shawl no longer in their accustomed place. The lateness of the hour, the un-

usualness of such absence on her part, the bitterness with which they had parted that morning, all pointed to one conclusion. She had left him. She had fled!

"Fernande! Fernande!"

Again and again he called her name, feeling that the cry was vain, yet unable to keep silence. Then he sat down like one dazed, all kinds of desperate possibilities crowding on his brain.

Might Fernande's disappearance mean something too terrible to shape into words? Had the estrangement of the last day or two induced her to quit her home in a state bordering on despair?

He rose at last and searched hither and thither, hoping to find a little note for him, and, by chance, his eye lighted upon a velvet bag that used to contain her prayer-book. The missal was gone; and that fact, insignificant although it was, allayed his worst fears. Fernande was a regular attendant at the Chapel of the Visitation, and numbered some of the sisters among her friends. She might, after all, have only absented herself for the midnight mass.

But his mind was not easy, and a playful speech made in the first days of their marriage now recurred to his memory.

"Ah!" Fernande had said, with the happy confidence of a young bride, "if you are ever unkind to me, I shall take refuge with the good nuns."

Whereupon he had laughingly rejoined, "On your peril! I shall send then two gendarmes to fetch you, in accordance with the laws of the land!"

"These jests came back with cruel irony as he now set out for the Chapel of the Visitation, feeling almost sure that he should find Fernande there. He was among the first to arrive, but though as yet the body of the building was almost empty, the nuns had already assembled in the screened-off space assigned to them. And there, between two of the black-draped figures, looking in her dark dress and long veil hardly less sombre, knelt Fernande!

He realised the truth in a moment. She had carried out the sportive threat alluded to in happier days. She had quitted her husband and her home, if it might be so, for ever!

Meantime the aisles filled, the moments wore on, and soon the rich, full strains of the organ pealed forth an opening voluntary, followed by the majestic music of Spohr. On none present did the sounds fall with more moving effect than on the husband and wife, separated in the fact by a few yards only; but, in the spirit, by what a widening breach of misconception and outraged feeling!

Fernande's heart was already yearning to him, and every phase of the music seemed to plead in favour of love, pity, and forgiveness. The solemnity of the occasion pleaded also. They were standing on the threshold of the new year. Now, above all others, was the moment to make peace with the world; and if with the world, how much more so with one's best Beloved? Warring against such impulses as these were the remembered disenchantment and pain of the last few days—Etienne's growing coldness, his infatuation for the great lady from Paris, his determination to go there. "Oh, no!" reasoned Fernande, thinking of the animated pair who had driven past her as she sat on the quays alone; "no, things can never be with us as before—never. Let him go to Paris and win fame and fortune. I am too humble to aid him. I will end my days with the sisters in peace."

And long after the church had emptied and the crowds dispersed Etienne waited outside, hoping that Fernande would come! He also was deeply moved by the music and the solemnity of the occasion; but he also, like Fernande, dwelt rather on his own grievances than on those he had caused another. She was blind, she was reckless, she refused to see that he only wanted to do the best thing for them both; he said, that he had her happiness and welfare at heart as well as the fulfilment of his dearest wishes.

In sorrow and extreme bitterness he returned at last, now blaming himself, now Fernande, and evil fortune most of all. What happy chance might unravel this hopeless complication? Like Fernande, he felt as if things could never be righted between them any more.

CHAPTER VI.

New-Year's Day dawned brilliantly; nothing brighter in the way of weather could be desired, and universal benignity, like the sun, was finding out even the humblest.

When Etienne entered Fernande's deserted little parlour he found already some modest gifts that had been slipped through the window, as the custom is in France when there is no servant to open the door. The eyes of the young man fell listlessly on the packets of bon-bons tied up with coloured ribbons, offerings of friends hardly richer than themselves. Someone had sent a lovely little cyclamen in flower, which seemed to beautify the room, but it did not gladden Etienne's eyes either. He was thinking of Fernande, and contrasting this New-Year's morn with the last. In spite of care and anxiety, how much better it had been than this, for no cloud as yet dimmed their affection, and in small trials as well as great they could comfort each other. The solemnity of the occasion, the consciousness of a new life that ever comes with the opening of another year, touched him, and made him feel tender—even remorseful. He blamed Fernande for leaving her home, but he also blamed himself now as the cause of her going. After all, how little could this great lady from Paris ever be to him! How less than nothing he was to her! But Fernande was his wife, and he knew that to her he was all in all.

Thinking these sad thoughts, on a sudden the window was opened by the postman, who instantaneously and without a word, as his habit was, dropped the letters on to the sill. One larger, more imposing than the rest, and having a richly emblazoned crest, caught Etienne's attention at once. Taking it up, he saw that the handwriting was that of the tragedian, and that it was addressed to his wife! He broke the seal—they had never any epistolary secrets from each other—and, hardly believing the evidence of his senses, read the following:—"From Madame Lorenzi to the wife of Etienne Kalogne—her New-Year's offering." These words were written in pencil, and below was an official statement to the effect that the Maire and the municipal council of the city having well considered Madame Lorenzi's recommendation of the young poet, Monsieur Etienne Kalogne, to the now vacant post of town librarian, begged to declare that he was nominated, and would be requested to enter on his duties at once.

Now, this letter certainly did not bring fame or fortune, nor did it bring the realization of Etienne's fondest dreams. But it brought the recognition of his fellow-townsmen, an assured income with an honourable calling, and leisure for literary pursuits—a thousand things better than fame, it seemed to Etienne in the first transports of his thankfulness and joy. He was no longer a pariah in society, no longer a beggar, and Fernande henceforth would have something like a home, indeed!

Need we say it? That day saw the husband and wife in happy reconciliation at the feet, literally, of their benefactress? And the tragedian, who was goodnature itself, yet playful even to maliciousness, could not forbear telling Etienne the story of the manuscript, and that it was Fernande who had, after all, mended his fortunes!



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JULIA'S LETTER CONTINUED.

With Harlequins, and Fairies, and Paul Prys,
And Merry Andrews—such a host of Guys!
And Barney Brallaghan fit partner had
In Judy Callaghan, both dancing mad!
This much I'll say—of fun there was *galore*!
But how we dressed, what characters we bore,
And all that happened, must be left to tell
When next we meet again, dear Isabel!
So, for the present, my beloved, Adieu!
A thousand kisses sweet I blow to you!

POSTSCRIPT.

Dear me! I had forgotten to allude
To one sweet scene—a kind of interlude
Aunt Isabel devised: she has a store
Of quaint conceits and mythologic lore!
A troop of rustic maidens came, with flowers—
To represent, I think, the Summer Hours—
Or something of the sort—as gifts from Flora,
Fresh from her altar gathered, for Aurora.
Well, these same nymphs, with rarest blooms bedecked,
Came gliding in, slow-paced, serene, erect;
Before each charming pair a little pet—
A boy and girl alternately—was set,
As kind of herald, so it seemed to me.—
A single group is sketched for you to see.

SECOND POSTSCRIPT.

I add this scrap of paper just to say—
A certain gentleman has called to-day!

THIRD POSTSCRIPT.

O joy! Papa will drive me o'er to B.
Next week, when I my darling girl shall see!
And *won't* we have a nice long tête-à-tête!
Of all our doings we'll confabulate!
And, locked within each other's arms, my dear,
I'll whisper *such* a secret in your ear!
Well, I declare! There goes the dinner-bell!
Good-bye! Good-bye! Your lovingest friend—J. L.



Ah! what a vision of faces
Comes as I stand and recall
Girlish and infantine graces,
Meeting me there in the hall.
Maud and her niece little Cherry,
Both ripe for kissing you'd say,
Magical mistletoe berry,
Where are your leaflets to-day?

Cherry had rights, and I own it,
Maud was distractingly fair,
What could I do to atone? it
Ended by kissing the pair.
Did you forgive me, *ma chérie*,
Then when your glances could slay?
Magical mistletoe berry,
Where are your leaflets to-day?

No, I can't say that I miss'd 'em,
Just like a cynical man,
Kissing reduced to a system
Means kissing all that you can.
Life has no solace but sherry;
Maud was to marry last May.
Magical mistletoe berry,
Where are your leaflets to-day?
H. SAVILE CLARKE.

DICK'S DILEMMA.
DRAWN BY A. HUNT.

THE LITTLE TOWN BY THE SEINE.

BY KATHARINE S. MACQUOID.

CHAPTER I.

A REPUBLICAN.

The old grey town that lies so sleepily beside the willow-fringed river, beneath the wooded hills which circle round the rich spires of its grand old church and the gables of its half-timbered houses, has a less sleepy look on it than usual. Many of the grey and black striped houses—so old now that they topple forward as if they would some day fall upon their opposite neighbours—are covered with posters, blue, green, red, and yellow, announcing that to-morrow is voting day, and requesting the votes of the townsmen of Caudebec for either Monsieur le Baron de Berville, or for Pierre Garage, “the defender of liberty and champion of social progress.” The town is partly built along the river bank, and one end of the quay is shaded by a double avenue of tall elm-trees. On a summer evening this is full of strollers; but on this evening, though the avenue is full of cool, green shadow, and though the sun sends between the trunks on the side nearest the river broad bands of ruddy gold, so that anyone might take delight in the pleasant chatting-place, there is no one to be seen there. It would be altogether empty, except that at the end nearest the town is a range of hay-waggons piled high above their long, open sides, and making the air fragrant far beyond where they stand. There would have been plenty of time to unload the hay, for it was brought in hours ago; but the carters are far too eager to join the crowd on the Grande Place, and they have unanimously agreed that no rain will fall till the day after to-morrow.

The square in front of the church is thronged with people; they are very full of talk, and there is much laughter, except at one corner, a little way out of the Place itself, on the left of the church. Half a dozen men are grouped here round a very singular figure—a small man in white trousers and a dark blue pea-jacket. Between his crimson necktie and his straw hat you see a pair of wild, gleaming dark eyes and a prodigious growth of black beard, which quivers as he gesticulates fiercely with long-nailed, dirty little hands.

“The practice of the first Republicans,” he is saying, “may have been sanguinary; but you who have not studied and read”—he passes one dirty palm across his eyes, and then looks up, condescendingly, on the taller men grouped round him—“you, I say,” he waves his hand in their faces, “you have no idea of the tyranny and oppression, the blood-thirsty despotism under which they had lain crushed and bleeding for centuries. They did a good deed—they trampled down arrogance and pride of birth, and with it the hypocrisy of all outward forms; but, my friends, their reign was too short—they scotched the snake, but they did not kill it, and I see, and careful watchers over their country’s welfare can see, the hydra reawakening. She has raised one head. Hypocrisy, in the shape of black-robed priests, stalks openly abroad; and now she raises another—what else means this array of titled names, of names we thought stamped out from the page of history, appearing among our representatives?”

He is interrupted. The tallest of his listeners, a sensible-looking man of about forty, puts his hand on the little orator’s shoulder. “Pierre, my friend, you let your imagination run away with you; there must be different classes of men and women; there always have been.”

Pierre Garage turns round fiercely. “You are, then, patrician at heart, Louis Dreux; what good have those tyrant hermits up yonder ever done for this town? For generations they have lived, shut up in their châteaux, only for themselves and their pleasures; or if they have deigned to remember our existence it has been to scoff at us as canaille. What claim, I ask,” he turns from Louis Dreux to the rest, “has this young Léon de Berville to come among us as our representative?”

Louis Dreux stands thinking. “I misunderstood you,” he says. “I thought you were attacking the existence of the upper class. I see that you object to the election of Monsieur de Berville. Am I right?”

Pierre Garage hesitates—he longs to trumpet forth both his atheism and his theories of social progress; but he wants to gain Louis Dreux’s vote and interest. Dreux is clever and just also, a foremost man among his respectable fellow-townsmen. So Garage nods at him, and clasps his massive brown hand between his own dirty fingers. “I knew you were with us in heart, my friend, in such a crisis.” Garage has been assisting at a crisis for the last twenty years. “We must only think of France. She pants for freedom. She has been maimed—crippled. Do what I say?” he foams with excitement, “she has been stifled, almost destroyed. She has but the strength of an infant; for, my friends,” he flings up both hands, “she is fresh from the throes of a new birth. Well, then, treat her as you treat an infant; leave her free—unshackled by petty restraints, old-fashioned customs, and miserable conventions, and she will grow like a giant; but she must be free—free; and her representatives must be as she is—new-born, not effete members of a rotten, worn-out system!” The little Republican almost shrieks out the last words.

Jacques Clapart, a short, round, fat man, the owner of the seed-shop round the corner, claps his hands as Garage pauses for breath, and then claps the excited orator on the shoulder.

“Bravo, Pierre! that is first-rate; speak so to the electors to-morrow, and there will not be much chance for the château.”

Garage keeps his wild black eyes fixed on Louis Dreux as if he feared by moving them to lose his ascendancy over the man. Jean Devisme, the tanner, and Haulard, the tailor, are speaking, the one eagerly and vociferously, the other in a low monotone; Louis Dreux is wrapt seemingly in his own thoughts.

All at once Garage seizes him by the button of his coat.

“Allons, my best friend, let me walk with you,” and he puts his hand under the taller man’s arm; “come away from this babel.” Then, as Dreux suffers himself to be led towards his house in the Grande Rue, Pierre goes on talking. “If I were a mere ranter—a man of words and vanity—I would not ask you to listen. But I am not one of the common herd. Look at me, Dreux. I do not drink, nor do I frequent cafés; I play neither billiards nor dominoes; the talk of my fellow-townsmen—the mere eating and swilling sort, men who resemble the pigs beside their houses—finds no response in me; I loathe them.”

“Then,” Dreux speaks, slowly, “you agree with the old Baron after all.”

Garage raises his free hand in protest. “Pardon. Not on the same grounds. I do not tell you of my alienation from any ill-feeling; it is to convince you that what I speak comes direct from this brain. But now let us talk of to-morrow.”

CHAPTER II.

VÉRONIQUE DREUX.

The clock of the old church of Notre Dame strikes half-past five, and in a few seconds the long, paved square in which it stands begins to show signs of life. One after another, first young and then older women come quietly out of the deeply-

recessed porch on the south side. An old man in an often-patched blouse straggles out after them, and then comes Monsieur le Curé; he is in a hurry, and does not stop to speak to anyone. The election is to take place to-day, as the coloured posters all round the Place will tell you; and there is no saying who may not be waiting at the Presbytery for the tall, portly priest. Perhaps Monsieur de Berville himself, for he is one of the candidates; and the lovers of peace and order and of the Catholic faith in the riverside town of Caudebec hope fervently that Monsieur de Berville will be returned, instead of that little Radical and atheist, Pierre Garage.

“It is not possible,” says toothless Toinette—and her chin shakes as she puts her mouth to the ear of her crony, deaf Elise, and repeats, “it is not possible, my friend.”

Elise is older than Toinette; but both their backs are so bent with hard outdoor work that when you have passed them you are quite surprised to see how bright and cheery are their faces. Elise even thinks her deafness a sort of joke, and, putting one shrivelled hand over her white muslin cap-string—doubly white against the deep brown skin—she says, “What is not possible, Mother Toinette?—a little louder, my friend.”

Some one has been following the pair of friends, and now she passes them, she is a buxom woman of middle height, some years more than thirty, though perhaps not so many as her tanned and hardened skin would seem to vouch for.

She laughs back at the old women, and you see what sweet dark eyes she has; and her red lips part and show her white, even teeth; her mouth is rather wide, but it is a good mouth; she has a straight, sensible nose and a low, broad forehead, only you can scarcely see it under the pale yellow kerchief tied over her cap, for Véronique works in the fields at this time of year, and puts on her kerchief to go to early mass.

She speaks to Elise in a clear, soft-toned voice, which the old woman hears more distinctly than the croaking of toothless Toinette.

“It is not possible that the town will be so wrong-headed as to vote for little Garage. It is a pity the vacancy came before Monsieur de Berville had time to show what he is.”

Elise blinks her watery blue eyes at the bright sunburnt face bending down with a smile on it that might sweeten a cynic, and then shakes her head.

Véronique smiles still, but Toinette’s chin wobbles, and she stares at Elise, unable to believe in her heresy.

“Like father, like son,” says the old deaf creature in an obstinate tone. “Monsieur le Baron lived shut up in his château; and whether we lived or died, it was all one to him. He called us canaille, whether we were good or bad.”

Véronique had walked silently along the grass-grown street beside the gossips. At this she laughed out.

“I wonder at you. The Baron was hard; but, poor gentleman, he was ill, and lame besides. He lived shut up till he thought his château the only place in the world where people knew anything. Monsieur de Berville is different; he has travelled in England, and in America even. I do not believe he will call us all canaille.”

Elise looked yet more obstinate. Toinette’s chin still wobbled, but her round eyes travelled from one face to the other. She was unable to decide for herself which had the best of the dispute. Elise is old, and must therefore be wise; but, then, Véronique has the advantage of a clever husband, who owns a piece of land outside the town.

“I have not seen Monsieur de Berville,” she says, “nor his lady, either. What are they like, Madame Dreux?”

“Monsieur Léon has not altered; you must remember him, Toinette,” says Véronique; “he is as handsome and as good as ever, and Madame is an angel. Only yesterday, as I came home, she stopped her carriage to inquire after the children.”

“Ta-ta,” says Elise, spitefully, “you have aristocratic prejudices, that is evident; it is easy to fling a little noble dust into your eyes. Do you think that Madame la Baronne would have spoken to you if to-morrow had not been the election?” There is a leer in the small shrunken eyes, and Véronique looks ruffled as she answers,

“I am sure she would, and you know nothing about her. I must be going, for my husband wants his coffee. Good-day to you both.”

She nods and hurries on; her short, dark blue skirts show well-fitting grey stockings and strong leather shoes, and neat feet and ankles also. Before she reaches her home, Véronique’s anger softens, and she laughs at herself.

“I was hasty,” she says; “poor Elise is sour about the château ever since the old Baron turned Eugène away; but Eugène was a drunkard, and the Baron was right. If Eugène was my son I might think differently, perhaps. Ah, mon chéri! mon petit bijou,” and she catches up in her arms a toddling child of three, who stands looking over the wooden barrier that prevents it from straying beyond the doorway.

CHAPTER III.

VÉRONIQUE’S HOUSEHOLD.

Véronique steps over the barrier, and a quick glance round the room on the left shows her that her husband is not there.

He is late this morning; but Véronique is glad that he has not had to wait for his coffee.

It stands there in a white earthenware pot ready on the stove; for she was up at four o’clock, and made it before she went to church. There is not much to notice in her room except its neatness and the glow which the brass pans reflect as the sun shines on them from the two broad windows opposite. A wonderful plant stands in the narrow window seat, a blue campanula, trained on a round frame.

There is a man’s step on the stairs, and Véronique pours out the coffee into a white basin on the table; then she fetches a tin jug and waters the glorious plant.

Louis Dreux comes slowly down with a bent head, for he is tall, and might, if he were not careful, knock his head against the beam above. He has a square head and a pleasing, square face; but below his forehead you can only see his honest grey eyes and broad nose, the rest of his countenance is covered with a curling chestnut beard.

“Good-day, papa,” says Véronique, as her husband appears, and Louis kisses the forehead presented to him, and pats his wife’s broad shoulders. “It is a busy day for Caudebec,” he says; and he looks unusually serious.

“You will vote for Monsieur de Berville?” she says.

“I—” He turns away from her. He does not want to see the appeal in those sweet eyes, always full of kindness for him. “Be sure I shall vote for the proper man, if I vote.”

Véronique’s serenity is disturbed. She leaves politics and municipal matters to her husband; she thinks that Louis knows all that happens in Paris as well as if he lived there; but, for all that, she has opinions, and one of these is that every man is bound to do his duty as a townsman, and voting is an important item in this duty.

“You are bound to vote, Louis,” she says, “and I hope it will be for the young Baron.”

“Why should I vote for him?” he says quietly. “He is a stranger to me now; he has been away for years till two months ago, and he knew that this election was likely to happen. His civility has been simple conciliation, that is all.”

“Louis”—Véronique looks indignant—“a gentleman would not do anything mean.”

Her husband laughs, and pinches her brown cheek. “We need not discuss it, my friend. When a man puts himself up for member it is necessary that he should not give offence. I do not say that Monsieur de Berville has behaved meanly, I say only that we have not yet seen his real side—ah, my Didi, my jewel, my little angel.” And down he goes, till his head is on a level with a dark and curly head that peeps in at the door—a charming miniature of Véronique. Didi pauses a second, and then makes a plunge forward, and buries her rosy brown face in her father’s blouse.

“And I—and I—and I—and I;” and there come in from the garden four brown, dark-eyed children, the very essence of health and brightness. Louis gets up from his squatting position, for the onslaught is severe and nearly sends him sprawling, he has to receive so many kisses from these warm, rosy lips. He laughs heartily, and forgets the election; and so does Véronique, when Marie comes in with the bonny baby in his white skull-cap.

“Kiss him, papa,” she says tenderly; “every day he grows more like you.”

“Papa, papa!” Louis the younger, being ten years old, is the responsible member of the healthy, happy group; “Papa” (he tugs at his father’s blouse, to divert his attention from the baby), “I am going to make hay; there is a holiday because of the election; and Berthe is going too.”

“Berthe is going too,” says round-faced Didi, gravely nodding her curly head; “and me too.”

“Hush, here is grandmother;” and Véronique goes forward to the foot of the stairs, and kisses first one withered cheek and then the other, and then stands aside while Louis, too, kisses his mother and leads her to her chair beside the fire.

Then the little ones have to be fondled by grandmamma, and grandpapa also, when he comes in. Véronique has no chance of any further talk with her husband, for in a minute he is gone. He is impatient to hear what is happening.

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE CHATEAU.

Up at the château, two miles away from Caudebec, there is also some excitement felt about the election. The château stands on a hill overlooking the Seine; but it is too closely circled with trees to be visible from the white road below. Monsieur de Berville stands beside his horse just below the terrace; he looks eagerly at the long windows which open on the broad stone step that runs along this side of the house. He has not long to wait—the centre window opens and a fair young girl steps out and comes forward to her husband. She is pretty; and as she bends down to him from the terrace you see how graceful her figure is, how pliant the movement of her round waist. Her young husband watches her with delight. They are still a pair of lovers of the kind that are likely to love through life, for their thoughts and wishes are in tune. He is not as tall for a man as she is for a woman, so that as she stands on the terrace she has to bend down to him; there is no looker-on, and her arm slips round his neck, and she whispers softly, “you will be careful, my Léon. There are some rough radicals in your little town, and if there were to be an outbreak—”

He kisses her and laughs. “When you have been here a little longer, Lucie, you will laugh too at the idea of an outbreak in the peace-loving place. They are excellent people—unless, perhaps, a little democrat or two, like Pierre Garage, and he is half crazy. You will soon be a favourite with all of them.”

“We shall see,” she says. “At present I know hardly anyone but Véronique Dreux; some of the old women look so very sourly at me that I shrink from speaking to them.”

“Never mind their sour looks,” he says gaily; “smile at them as you are smiling now, and you will get their good will. I wish them to consider us as friends. My father’s ill-health kept him too much shut up—au revoir, my friend, you shall know as soon as the votes are counted.” He springs on his horse and is soon out of sight, waving his hand as he goes down the zig-zagged road.

Lucie de Berville stands where he had left her. She knows she shall get another glimpse of him before he is out of the park. A flight of white pigeons flutters round her, but she does not even turn her head to look at them; just then life holds only one thing for her—her beloved Léon.

“If we had stayed in Italy we should have escaped all this,” and then she checks the thought. Her dearest wish is to see Léon take a distinguished place among his fellow-men. “The saddest lot a man can have,” she says, “is that when he dies no one misses his powers of usefulness. Till now we have been living the life of butterflies.”

Meanwhile her husband had reached Caudebec, and had left his horse at the Hôtel de la Marine. The little town was literally red and yellow with posters, Garage’s colours; and the windows of his committee-room on the Place were gorgeously decorated. Monsieur de Berville met Louis Dreux on the Place, and he frankly held out his hand.

“Good-day, Monsieur le Baron!” But Dreux bowed, and crossed over to a voting-stall at the end of the Place.

Léon looked after him in wonder. He and Louis had been great friends as boys, and the first persons to whom he had introduced his wife in the Grande Rue of Caudebec had been Véronique and her husband. He remembered that Louis had refused to be on his committee; but he had attributed this to shyness, as several of the gentry had come forward as his supporters. Now, as he saw Louis Dreux go to the voting-stall, his heart sank.

“If he were going to vote for me he would not have refused my hand; and if a respectable good fellow like that supports Garage, then I have not much hope from the town of Caudebec.”

Still he forced himself to look bright as he went up stairs to join his friends. About a dozen gentlemen came forward eagerly to greet him.

“You are late, however, my friend,” said the old Marquis de Villequier. “That vaurien Garage has made a speech an hour long; and the scamp speaks cleverly, too, though he is such a ruffian. But now let us go to business.”

CHAPTER V.

A TIFF.

Véronique has had a hard morning’s work, but she nods and smiles at the two old people sitting under the porch as she bustles in and out from the garden into the house. She has washed, and baked, and set her house in order, and cooked the midday dinner; now she has spread the table, and all is ready; they only wait for the master.

The church clock strikes twelve, and as the old people come in slowly from the porch Louis Dreux comes in at the front door. He looks grave, and when little Roger runs against him he frowns and bids him be careful.

Véronique is filling the soup-basins from the pot-au-feu, but she looks up hastily; it is so rare to hear Louis speak roughly to his children.

"Come here, Roger," she says; "carry this basin for me." The child looks ready to cry, and she wishes to prevent this; but her husband only wants a vent for his discontent. "Leave Roger alone," he says roughly; "he is a naughty boy."

At this Roger bursts into a tempest of sobs; he flings himself face downwards on the floor, and kicks and howls with despair. Véronique hesitates. She cannot bear to blame her husband before his children, and yet it is so sad that her darling Roger should be made unhappy for nothing. But the grandmother has no such scruples.

"For shame, then, Louis," she rises and, stooping down, tries to raise the little sobber. The grandfather grumbles between his teeth, "it is better to set a good example than to scold;" but Louis begins to eat in dogged silence, and the only sounds are the clink of spoons, the swallowing of soup, and the tender crooning of the grandmother, who has got Roger between her knees, wiping his crimson swollen cheeks with her apron.

All at once Didi's shrill little voice breaks the gloomy silence. "Why, then, papa," the sweet dimpled face is raised in earnest inquiry, "why does Roger cry when he has not been naughty?"

There is a little hushed suspense, and Louis Dreux is conscious that the rosy faces are open-mouthed and gazing at him till he answers.

He stoops down, kisses Didi, and then rises abruptly from the table.

"I must leave you, good people. I must go back to the Place."

Before he reaches the entrance he feels that his wife is following him. She shuts the door of the room behind her.

"Well, Véronique," his tone is half surly, as if he wished to avoid her.

"I must speak to you, dear friend," she says so gently that he thinks she is going to plead for Roger. "You will not vote for Pierre Garage, my Louis."

"Peste!" he says between his teeth, "do not meddle, Véronique—you do not understand politics, and you cannot judge."

He looks so anxious to be gone that she holds his arm with both hands.

"I do not understand politics, it is true, but I know a good man from a bad one, and, Louis, I cannot see you do wrong without trying to prevent it. Monsieur de Berville may not be of your way of thinking, but no one can say he is not good, and Pierre Garage," she looks eager with indignation, "is bad and wicked."

Louis frowns sternly, and surprise keeps Véronique silent.

"I am ashamed of you," he says hotly; "you, too, who always seemed above the ordinary pettiness of a woman, you have no right to take away a man's character just to serve your own ends. Let me go."

Véronique's grasp is too strong to be easily shaken off; and Louis, with all his anger, cannot treat her roughly.

"Listen," she pants, with the effort to get out her words quickly; "a representative should at least set an example of good conduct; and Pierre Garage and his wife quarrel and fight and beat one another. While his old father lived they agreed better, for they both used to beat the poor old man. He came to grandpapa one day for shelter and cried, and, when he died, do you know what they did, Louis?—they dug a hole in the side of the hill and buried him in a common box. Pierre said a priest meant hypocrisy, and ceremonies were nonsense; and they shovelled the earth over him, with the help of some tramps they had got to carry him. It was while you were at Rouen, in the winter; and people cried shame upon the Mayor for suffering it. But I am not sure that Monsieur le Maire is a good Catholic."

"There, let me go, my girl, I have heard enough gossip for once; and you are too late: I have already voted."

He has kept his face turned away; and now he hurries off. Véronique's brown cheeks have grown pale; and she leans against the wall of the passage.

"My poor Louis," she says; "oh, how wrong he has been."

But she has no time for regrets; she has to send off her little ones for their holiday, and to clear away the dinner before she starts for the hay-field.

It is a hot walk, for the road along the Seine towards Rouen is not shaded, and both little Louis and his mother have very red faces before they reach the field. Véronique fastens her skirts behind her, and joins three other women who have been working there since morning.

"Aha, aha, Madame," says a wrinkled crone, while she tosses hay into the cart with the dexterity of a girl; "it is dry work, Madame, but we have not a minute to spare."

They all toil on at loading, lightening their work by merry jests and sometimes by a fragment of a song; and little Louis contributes much to the amusement of the rest. But it seems as if the long cart will never be filled; but at last, when Véronique stands on the top of the load prodding it here and there with her hay-fork to see if all is compactly built together, she is at a towering height above the field, her dark skirts and white cap, for her kerchief has fallen back, standing out solidly from the green of the evening sky.

A faint cry reaches her. In the road below the sloping field a lady driving a pair of ponies has come to a standstill.

Véronique smiles; she recognises Madame de Berville. "I was just coming down," she says; "here, you Jeanne, tighten that cord, and Augustine and Marie hold the ladder."

Louis also holds the ladder, he is terrified for his mother's safety, and he calls out, "Gars—gars! ma petite mère," while Véronique steps down the ladder as if she did this kind of thing every day.

She nods to Madame de Berville as she comes up to the low hedge which separates the field from the road. Something in the lady's delicate, refined face has a strange fascination for Véronique; but to-night, after her first smiling nod, she looks grave, and is almost still in answering Madame de Berville's laughing questions.

"What ails you, Madame Dreux; you look pale and fagged. Standing on the top there has made you giddy, though you looked such a picture; I only wished my husband had been here to sketch you. Let me drive you home. See, there is room for you and for Louis too between us. Please come."

The limpid blue eyes look imploring. Véronique thinks how pleasant it would be, but it will displease her husband if she drives into Caudebec with the young lady.

"I thank you from my heart, Madame, for your goodness, but I cannot go with you; I have still matters to see to," she looks back at the hay-cart, "and Monsieur de Berville will be waiting. I fancy the votes are counted by now."

"Have you any idea how it has gone?" says Madame de Berville, playing nervously with her whip.

"No, Madame, I have been here since midday."

"Au revoir, then, Madame Dreux, and I hope your hay will do well; but it is tiresome of you not to let me take you home." Then, as she drives on to the town—"how unfriendly she is this afternoon. I expected to find her full of interest in Léon's success, and she thinks only of her hay."

Poor Véronique's heart swelled with shame. She felt that somehow it would be known at the château how Louis had voted for Pierre Garage.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PUMPKIN-FIELD.

Two months have gone by since the townsmen of Caudebec returned Pierre Garage as their member. The little Democrat was triumphant, Monsieur de Berville was disappointed, and his sweet wife was very angry.

"Even if they were too blind to chose my Léon," she said, "they need not have chosen such a little Republican monster." She could not forgive the blindness of the townsmen of Caudebec.

She would not go to the town church for a fortnight, but contented herself with the service in the chapel of the little hamlet below the château.

Her husband smiled at her vehemence, but he said it made no difference to him. He wished to show his neighbours that he considered himself one of them, always ready to lend a helping hand or a sympathising ear when required to do so; and his idea of life was that deeds do more than words.

Haulard, the tailor, who had stood neuter in the election, sang the young Baron's praises loudly, and seconded his proposal that there should be duck races and other sports in the coming autumn holidays, Monsieur de Berville having offered to give the prizes to successful competitors.

Jacques Clapau even had begun to wonder whether he had made a mistake in voting for Garage. Only Louis Dreux held himself aloof from his neighbours. Since the day of the election a blight seemed to have fallen on him. He was irritable with his children, silent and indifferent when with his wife or mother, and Véronique feared he must be ill, he seemed so changed. She tried her best to keep the home bright and cheerful; but she knew that the father's presence, once the chief joy of all, was now a restraint on her little ones.

The holidays had begun, and little Louis had got to the troublesome age; he teased his sisters and cuffed his brothers, and it was hard work to keep him out of their way.

"Mother," he said one day at dinner-time, "I tell you what I'll do. I will go away all the afternoon, and I'll take Roger with me. Madame de Berville said that I might play in the wood at the top of the hill whenever I liked, and that I was to tell the guardian I had her leave to go there."

"That is nice for you, my child. Roger will like to go with you."

Louis Dreux had been sitting at the head of the table, looking as if he took no interest in what was going on. "The children cannot go into the wood," he spoke decidedly, but he did not look at his wife. "I will accept no favours from the château, neither shall my children. Louis can take his brother along the high road, that will do."

Louis the younger grew red and stormy, but his mother patted his shoulder. "Yes, yes," she said; "go along the road, and perhaps Didi and I will come and meet you."

The children jumped up, scraping their chairs along the wooden floor, and dispersed; but the father lingered, even after his parents had gone to their usual seat in the porch. Véronique looked at her husband. She longed to break through this strange reserve, which had set a barrier between them. But then his mother had said, "Best leave him to himself, my daughter;" and though Véronique had been married nearly a dozen years, she revered the wisdom of her husband's mother, and consulted her in her troubles. As she now looked at her husband, she thought there was a wistful look on his face; but while she hesitated he went out abruptly, and Véronique felt grieved that she had not spoken.

Meantime Louis the younger had got to some distance from home. At first he and Roger walked side by side, the elder brother telling his school exploits, while Roger listened, eyes and mouth round with wonder, and every now and then clapped his fat brown hands in ecstasy at his brother's tales.

They have now come to where the road parts into two—that on the right follows the river closely, while the other is cut on the side of the steep hill above. Louis takes the lower road.

"Let us go and see if the pumpkins are ripe," he says. "You like to see them turning red and yellow, don't you, Roger?"

"Yes, yes," says Roger. "It is like grandmother's story of Cinderella. Ah! I wish I could see a pumpkin turn into a golden coach."

"A pumpkin is ever so much prettier than a coach is," says Louis, scoffingly. "Look! Roger. See, they show like red gold among the leaves."

"I can't see," says Roger, straining to stand on tiptoe, his rosy cheeks puffed out like a trumpeter's. "It's nice for you; you can see. I like the coach best."

Louis grips his little brother round the waist, and hoists him up till he sees over the hedge. The pumpkin-field is on a slope, and for anyone tall enough to see over the low hedge there is a glorious spectacle. Hundreds of large pumpkins—some a rich rosy gold; others green and scarlet, shaped like a turban; and others, still green, shine and glisten among their beautiful leaves and tendrils.

"Ah, they are fine!" cries Roger. But as he is very heavy he has only a rapid glance, and then Louis drops him as if he were a hot coal; but, remembering his mother's solemn charge to take care of Roger, he keeps fast hold of his arm.

"Keep close to me, little one; presently I will lift you up again."

For a few minutes Roger submits to this guidance, but after a little he wriggles away. "Please, Louis, only for a moment; there is a fine ladybird, and I must take her home to Didi."

Louis looses his hold, and Roger drops on his knees to pick up the little scarlet treasure, which glitters like a gem on the dusty path. A little way on, the road leaves off mounting and slopes down till it comes almost on a level with the water on the right. It is, however, at a wider distance from it, for below the bank, and running parallel with it, are long green tongues, strips of land in process of being reclaimed from the river; rushes grow thickly on these and along the edge of the bank, and just where the river sweeps round in a sudden curve, full of dark mystery, is a little white light-house, the dwelling of the pilot who warns the unwary of the fearful current in the bend.

Roger holds his ladybird safe in his little hot hand, but his eyes are fixed on the rushes. He knows how to plait. Grand-mamma has taught him; and he thinks that his mother would help him to weave a cage for the ladybird if he could only get some rushes to take home.

"Louis! Louis! look at the beautiful rushes." He tugs at his brother's blouse, but Louis does not turn round.

"Be quiet, Roger," he says, "you put me out; I am counting the pumpkins;" and he goes on aloud, "forty-five, forty-six," till he reaches one hundred and ninety.

"What a number!" He pauses. How still everything is! He looks round. There is no chubby, brown face near him. He is alone in the long white road.

For a moment the boy stands still, dazed with terror. Then, his fear serving as guide, he scrambles over the edge of

the bank, and looks earnestly at the river. There is nothing to be seen in front except the fringe of grey willows. Then he looks on towards the bend—the dreaded part of the Seine. All at once he shrieks out loudly, and flings up his arms. He sees something moving on the end of one of the long green strips. He puts his hand over his eyes and strains his sight to see yet more clearly. Yes, there is Roger crawling cautiously on hands and knees to the extreme point where the best rushes grow. Louis stands fascinated by the sight. He wonders mechanically whether the edge is soft, and whether he shall see Roger in another moment struggling in the water; and then, like a flash, comes the memory of the current, and with it comes back his presence of mind.

"Au secours! au secours!" he cries loudly, and then he scrambles up the bank and runs back as fast as he can go along the road to the town.

The Grande Rue of Caudebec, as every one knows, is on this, the Berville, side of the town, so that Louis has not very far to run; but terror has taken away his breath. He meets Jean Devisme, the tanner, and then he sees Martin, the brawny blacksmith, standing at the door of his smithy; but though they eagerly question him—for his white face attracts their attention—he can only gasp, and point over his shoulder.

Jean Devisme goes on his way, shrugging his shoulders. But Martin is more tender-hearted; he sees that something is strangely amiss, and he follows the boy closely.

Panting and almost fainting, Louis comes within sight of home at last. Grandpapa sits outside the door smoking, and Véronique stands just behind him, chatting. She looks so serene and trim in her well-fitting black stuff gown. She has no cap, and her shining dark hair is closely braided round her head. It is not easy to realise that she is the hard-working, energetic housewife we saw mounted on the top of her hay-cart two months ago. She bends down to the old man, smiling. She does not see her boy as he rushes towards her.

But Martin's deep, strong voice sounds out as herald.

"Madame Dreux, see to Louis; something is wrong."

The panting boy has reached her. He has just strength to say, "Roger—the river!" and then he flings both arms round his mother and bursts into convulsive sobs.

"Mon Dieu! where, where?" Véronique turns a ghastly white. Then "My husband is out. Good Martin, go at once and save my little one? Come—come! Roger, where is he?"

The blacksmith takes the sobbing boy by the shoulder.

"Come, come, my lad, leave off crying, and tell me where Roger is."

Louis throws up his arms.

"Mon Dieu!" he cries. "What do I know? He is in the river by now. He was on the point by the lighthouse."

Martin was off before the last words were said. Véronique, too, had vanished. His grandfather had risen trembling with agitation; he clutched Louis firmly by the collar of his blouse.

"Vaurien," he said, sternly; "and your mother trusted him to your care?"

It was more than the child could bear. He tore himself away, and flew down the street after Martin, crying wildly, "Au secours!—au secours!" Véronique ran to the café on the Place, but her husband was not there. She found, however, Monsieur Haulard and two young men, and sent them after the blacksmith.

"Do not fear, Madame," said the imperturbable tailor; "there is always a boat at the lighthouse; we will bring you back your boy."

"There is the current," said one of the younger men; and Véronique's heart sank. She hurried off in search of her husband.

Someone says he is at the hotel on the quay; but as she comes out near the avenue she sees him.

She, too, is breathless with fear and suspense.

"Husband, husband!" she pulls at his arm—"come with me to the river. Roger, perhaps, is drowning by the lighthouse."

"My God!" That is all he says, and then the husband and wife hurry along the white dusty road.

They have reached the point where the road parts into two, and Véronique points down towards the river. Then they both stand still. A group of persons is moving towards them: someone on horseback among the rest. Till now Véronique has borne up, but Louis feels that she trembles violently. He was about to hurry on alone, to spare her the shock of what he fears; but now he puts his arm round her to support her, and stands still beside her, waiting.

Waiting for what? "Have they been too late?" Véronique murmurs.

It seems to her and to her husband too that the man on horseback carries something in front of him; but they cannot speak—they dare scarcely breathe—a mist seems before their eyes.

The horse is close beside them. "It is all right, Madame," says the voice of Monsieur de Berville; "your little boy has escaped with a wetting, but I was only just in time."

While he speaks he gives the child into his father's arms and then gets off his horse. He is going to shake hands with Véronique, but she clasps his hand in both hers and covers it with tears and kisses.

"Ah, Monsieur," she says, "how good you are. I shall never be able to thank you."

Léon de Berville shakes her hands warmly.

"You overrate my little service. I was down near the bend, fishing, and I heard a cry for help—not from Roger, though. When I came in sight of him he was tugging at the rushes, and then all at once he slipped into the river; but the rushes supported him till I reached him."

Véronique has taken the child from his father, and is smothering him with kisses.

"Set him down and let him run home," says Louis Dreux. "It will do him good after his wetting."

By this time the blacksmith and the others have come up, and Haulard offers his deliberate congratulations; but Martin snatches Roger up in his strong arms.

"I will lecture the little rascal," he says, laughing, and he nods to Véronique as he strides on.

Monsieur de Berville is left alone with the husband and wife. Véronique feels troubled by her husband's silence.

But as the others pass out of hearing he turns to Léon de Berville.

"Monsieur, I owe you more than for saving my child," he says huskily—it seems as if a sob was prisoned in his throat and could not get free; "you have taught me, Monsieur Léon, that you have not changed, and that Véronique was right, as she always is, and I was wrong. Forgive me for doubting you and for playing the ungrateful part I did."

Monsieur de Berville gave his hand a hearty grasp. He was touched to hear Dreux say the old familiar name—"Monsieur Léon."

"Stay, I have not ended," Dreux said, earnestly. "I have been a fool—no one but my wife knows how great a one; but if I could undo my work I would, and I may have the chance some day. Ah, Monsieur Léon, you have really heaped coals of fire on my head."



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THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER.

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The constitution of the person and the condition of the scalp have much to do with the length of time it requires for new hair to grow; also thin or thick hair will depend much upon the state of force remaining in the hair-glands. New hairs are first seen to force their way through the margin of the bald spots near the permanent start around the circumference of the bald spots, and in cases of less thickly with fine short hair. Excessive brushing should be guarded against as soon as the small hairs make their appearance; but the scalp may be sponged with rain water to advance the hair, and the finger ends, which quickens the circulation of the blood, and softens the spots which have remained long bald. On applying this hair-dressing it enlivens the scalp, and in cases where the hair begins to fall a few applications will arrest it, and the new growth presents as the best hair-dressing known for restoring grey or faded hair to its original colour without dyeing it, producing the colour within the substance of the hair, imparting a peculiar vitality to the roots, preventing the hair from falling, keeping the head cool, clean, and free from dandruff, causing new hairs to grow, unless the hair-glands are entirely decayed. THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER makes the hair soft, glossy, and luxuriant. Sold by Chemists and Perfumers at 3s. 6d.; or sent to any address free on receipt of 4s. in stamps.

THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER.

When the hair is weak and faded,
Like the autumn leaves that fall,
Then is felt that saddest feeling,
Which does every heart enthrall,
Then we look for some specific
To arrest it on its way.
And the MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER
Bids it like enchantment stay.

It arrests decaying progress:
Though the hair is thin and grey
It will strengthen and improve it,
And work wonders day by day.
It restores the colour,
And brings back its beauty, too;
For THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER
Makes it look both fresh and new.

What is the greatest hair restorer
That the present age can show;
What produces wonders daily,
Which does every heart should know?
Why, THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER
Emphatically stands the first;
Thus its fame by countless thousands
Day by day is now rehearsed.

What beautifies, improves, and strengthens
Human hair of every age?
Why, this glorious great restorer
With the ladies is the rage,
And THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER
Is the very best in use.
For luxuriant tresses always
Does its magic powers produce.

THE WORDS "THE MEXICAN HAIR RENEWER" are a Trade Mark; and the public will please see the words are on every case surrounding the Bottle, and the name is blown in the bottle.

The Mexican Hair Renewer. Price 3s. 6d. Directions in German, French, and Spanish.

May be had of most respectable Dealers in all parts of the Kingdom.

Sold Wholesale by the ANGLO-AMERICAN DRUG COMPANY, Limited, 33, Farringdon-road, London.

SEIGEL'S CURATIVE SYRUP.

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THE CARELESS NURSE.
DRAWN BY MISS M. E. EDWARDS.

"THOUGHTS, LIKE SNOWFLAKES ON SOME FAR-OFF MOUNTAIN SIDE, GO ON ACCUMULATING TILL SOME GREAT TRUTH IS LOOSENED, AND FALLS LIKE AN AVALANCHE ON THE WAITING WORLD."

HUMAN LIFE, IGNORANCE, & WISDOM.

THE GREAT JEOPARDY OF
LIFE
IN THE MOST ENLIGHTENED
PERIOD—
THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

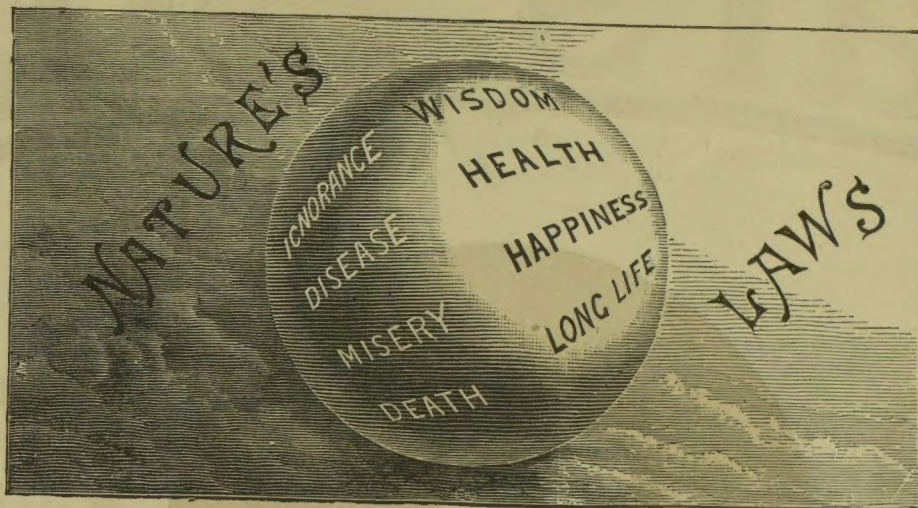
THE SANITARY CONGRESS,
October, 1878.—In an INAUGURAL ADDRESS on the SANITARY CONDITION OF ENGLAND, E. CHADWICK, C.B., states that "Ignorance of sanitary science costs threefold the amount of poor-rates for the country generally."

THE PLAGUE.

EUROPE ALONE LOST TWENTY-FIVE MILLIONS OF SOULS in the FOURTEENTH CENTURY. Its Birthplace and Cradle is now an Eastern Occurrence. How few know, even now, what a fearful state of Sanitary Ignorance we live in. Improved knowledge hinders blood poisons from becoming intensified. ALL SHOULD READ ENO'S ILLUSTRATED SHEET, given free with

ENO'S FRUIT SALT.

If this invaluable information were universally carried out, many forms of Disease now!! producing such havoc would cease to exist—as Plague, Leprosy, &c., have done when the true cause has become known.



TO PROMOTE HEALTH and
LONGEVITY, USE

ENO'S FRUIT SALT.

FROM the ASCENT

TO the DESCENT

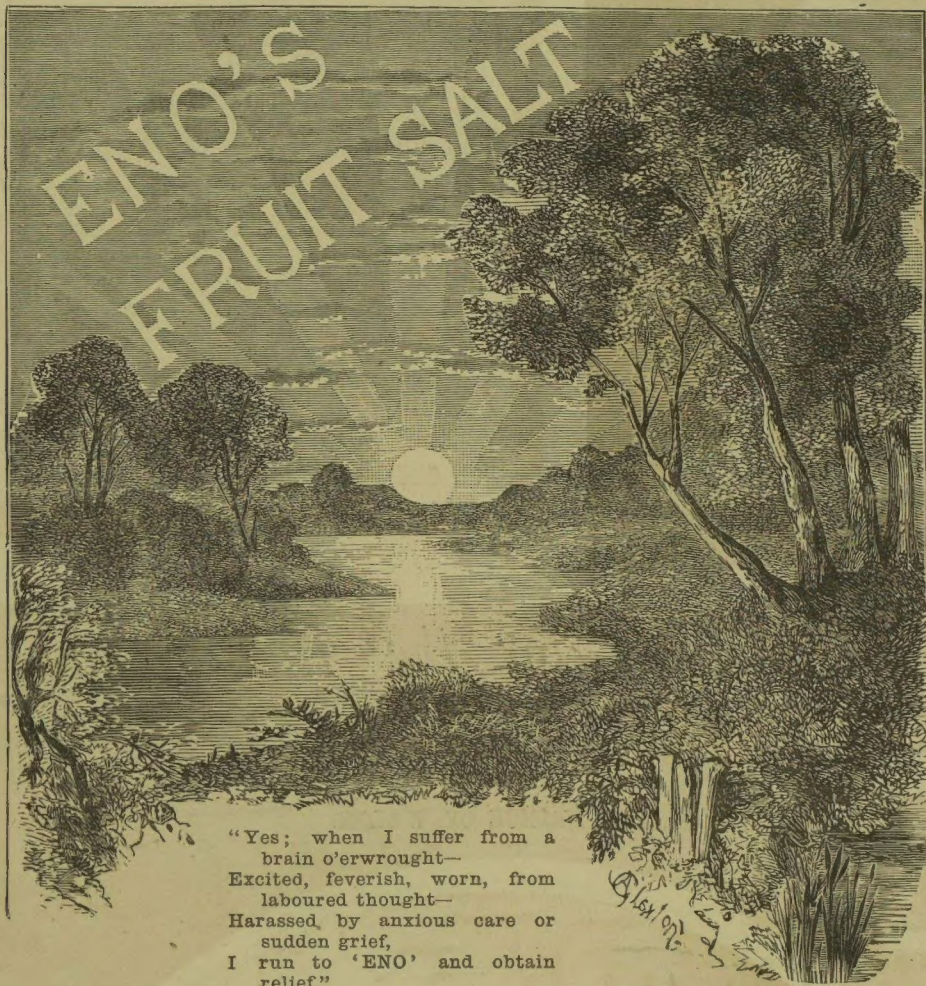
OF the CURTAIN

OF this LIFE

ENO'S FRUIT SALT

REMOVES POISONOUS MATTER caused by vitiated air, errors of eating or drinking, &c., by natural means. No one is safe without having at hand some efficient means of warding off BLOOD POISONS. After a very patient and careful observation, extending over many years, of the effects of ENO'S FRUIT SALT, I have not the least hesitation in stating that if its great value in keeping the body healthy were universally known not a single travelling-trunk or portmanteau would be without it.

IMPORTANT TO ALL.



"Yes; when I suffer from a brain overwrought—Excited, feverish, worn, from laboured thought—Harassed by anxious care or sudden grief, I run to 'ENO' and obtain relief."

A SONG OF GRATITUDE.

BY AN F.S.A. OF EIGHTY YEARS OF AGE.

THESE words a wise Physician said:

"STOMACH'S a master all should dread."

Oppose his laws for Death prepare!

Obeys them—Health will triumph there!

With grateful thanks I hail thy name,

ENO! and strive to give it fame.

Your SALT-OF-FRUIT can bring me ease,

And give me comfort when I please:

By true aperient, strong or mild,

To calm a man or soothe a child;

Aid Nature, without force or strain,

Strengthen heart, liver, lung, and brain;

Make the pulse neither fast nor slow,

The blood heat not too high nor low.

So bringing health, at little cost,

Restoring what neglect had lost!

To ENO'S SALT I owe a debt,

The grateful mind may not forget;

With rhyme that debt, in part, I pay,

Experience teaching what to say.

JEOPARDY OF LIFE. THE GREAT DANGER OF DELAY.

YOU CAN CHANGE THE TRICKLING STREAM, BUT NOT THE RAGING TORRENT.

BLOOD POISONS.

THE PREDISPOSING CAUSE OF DISEASE; OR, HOW TO PREVENT A SUSCEPTIBILITY TO TAKE DISEASE.



After suffering from FEVER FOUR TIMES, in each attack with very great severity—in fact, three of them could not have been more dangerous or critical—from a very extensive and careful observation, extending over a period of forty years, I am perfectly satisfied the "true cause" of fever is a disordered condition of the liver. The office of the liver is to cleanse the blood, as a scavenger might sweep the streets. When the liver is not working properly, a quantity of wastes or effete matter is left floating in the blood. Under these circumstances, should the poison germ of fever be absorbed, then the disease results; on the contrary, anyone whose liver and other organs are in a normal condition may be subjected to precisely the same conditions as to the contagious influences, and yet escape the fever. This, I consider, explains the seeming mystery that some persons who are placed in circumstances peculiarly favourable for the development of fever—who, in fact, live in the very midst of it—escape unscathed. This being the case, the importance of keeping the liver in order cannot be over-estimated; and I have pleasure in directing attention to my FRUIT SALT, which, in the form of a pleasant beverage, will correct the action of the liver, and thus prevent the many disastrous consequences; not only as an efficient means of warding off Fevers and malarious diseases, but as a remedy for, and preventive of, Bilious or Sick Headaches, Constipation, Vomiting, Thirst, Errors of Eating and Drinking, Skin Eruptions, Giddiness, Heartburn, &c. If its great value in keeping the body in health were universally known, no family would be without a supply. In many forms of Fever, or at the commencement of any fever, ENO'S FRUIT SALT acts as a specific. No one can have a simpler or more efficient remedy; by its use the poison is thrown off and the blood restored to its healthy condition. I used my FRUIT SALT freely in my last attack of fever, and I have every reason to say it saved my life.—J. C. ENO, Hatcham, Fruit Salt Works, S.E.

TO ALL LEAVING HOME FOR A CHANGE.—Bilious Attacks and Sea Sickness.—"I can seldom go to sea without being sick, and I can safely say ENO'S FRUIT SALT is the only thing that ever gave me relief, and I shall ever recommend it to all who suffer from sea sickness.—I am, yours truly, W. BOYCE, Signalman, H.M.S. Industry, May, 24, 1880."

BILIOUSNESS, LOSS OF APPETITE, AND GENERAL DEBILITY.—"In testifying to the value of your Fruit Salt, I have great pleasure in pronouncing it to be a most efficacious remedy in cases of biliousness, loss of appetite, and general debility. I have tried all kinds of saline at different times, but none of them have afforded me that speedy and lasting relief which makes such a feature in your medicine. You are free to use this letter in any way you may think most convenient. It comes quite unsolicited, and many of my friends are willing to endorse the remarks made therein.—S. G. S., Epping, Essex."

THE ART OF CONQUEST IS LOST WITHOUT THE ART OF EATING.—A gentleman writes:—"When I feel out of sorts, I take a dose of Eno's Fruit Salt one hour before dinner; the effect is all I could wish." How to enjoy good food, that would otherwise cause biliousness, headache, or disordered stomach, use ENO'S FRUIT SALT.

RUSSIA AND ENO'S FRUIT SALT.—IMPORTANT TO PARENTS.—An English Chaplain writes:—"Would you kindly inform me whether you have an agent in Russia for the sale of your FRUIT SALT? If not, would it be possible to send two or three bottles through the post? We have used your FRUIT SALT now for some time, and think so highly of it that my wife says she would not be without it for a great deal. For children's ailments I know of nothing to equal it. It acts like a charm. Our little ones have had no other medicine for some time, no matter what the ailment may be. Cold, headache, or stomach-ache, the FRUIT SALT seems to cure in a marvellously short time. The FRUIT SALT seems to be just the medicine we have required for a long time—something thoroughly efficacious, which acts quickly and is pleasant to the taste.—I am, faithfully yours, A BRITISH CHAPLAIN.—March 10, 1880."

NEW GUINEA.—"How I wished I had a dozen bottles of ENO'S FRUIT SALT! It is the best medicine I have ever had, and the most refreshing drink I have yet tried."—Explorations by the Rev. J. Chalmers, London Missionary Society.

SUCCESS IN LIFE.—"A new invention is brought before the public and commands success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit."—Adams.

PREPARED ONLY BY J. C. ENO'S PATENT, AT ENO'S FRUIT SALT WORKS, HATCHAM, LONDON, S.E.

CAUTION.—Examine each Bottle and see the capsule is marked "ENO'S FRUIT SALT." Without, you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation. SOLD BY ALL CHEMISTS. Price 2s. 9d. and 4s. 6d.

Pears' Soap

PEARS' SOAP

Is guaranteed absolutely pure, free from excess of alkali and from artificial colouring. It is agreeably perfumed, and is economical from its remarkable durability. It has received general approbation for nearly a century, and the Prize Medal for Complexion Soaps at Seven International Exhibitions. For persons with sensitive skin it is of infinite value, its regular use ensuring freedom from Redness, Roughness, and Chapping, whilst it imparts to the hands a soft, velvety feeling, and a clear, healthful tone to the Complexion.



"YOU DIRTY BOY!"

This humorous and universally known Statuette, by Focardi, was purchased at the Paris Exhibition of 1878 by Messrs. PEARS for

£500.

At the request of many connoisseurs and admirers of Art, the Proprietors have caused reproductions to be made in Terra-Cotta, of the following sizes:—

25 inches high	£6 6s.
18 inches high	£3 3s.

FOR STATUETTES, ORDERS SHOULD BE SENT TO

A. & F. PEARS,

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"I have found PEARS' SOAP matchless for the Hands and Complexion."

BY SPECIAL APPOINTMENT TO



H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES.



FOR THE
COMPLEXION.

ESTABLISHED
1789.

SOLD EVERYWHERE.

PURE,
FRAGRANT,
AND DURABLE.